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W E S T V I R G I N I A
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2005

Big Game Bulletin



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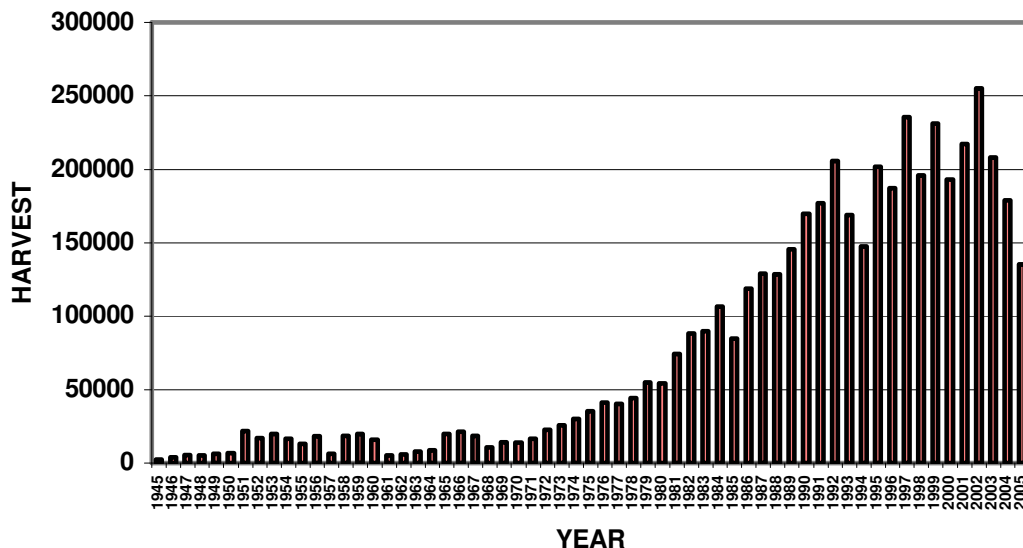
WHITE-TAILED DEER

by
James M. Crum

Deer Harvest 2005

The following Tables 1 through 9 contain the 2005 white-tailed deer hunter harvest information for each of West Virginia's 55 counties and the various public lands scattered across the state. In 2005, deer hunters harvested a total of 135,361 deer in the combined deer seasons. This is a 24% decrease from the 2004 harvest and 36% less than the previous five-year harvest average of 210,607. The combined deer season harvest for 2005 is the seventeenth largest total deer harvest on record for West Virginia. The 2005 total deer harvest represents one deer killed for every 108 acres of deer habitat in the state (Table 9), and a 33% harvest decrease from that of 10 years ago. From 1945 through 2005, 4,765,375 deer have been recorded as harvested in West Virginia. Sixty-two percent (2,939,241) of the total recorded deer harvest of the past 61 years has occurred in the last 15 years.

WV DEER HARVEST 1945-2005



In 2005, the traditional bucks-only firearm season harvest of antlered bucks was 56,901, a decrease of 11% from the 2004 harvest (Table 1). This is 33% less than the five-year average harvest of 84,322, and ranks twenty-first among all past years. The 2005 antlerless season deer harvest decreased by 36% from 2004 and was down 54% from the record harvest of 104,199 recorded in 2002. A total of 47,447 antlerless deer (Table 5) were taken in an antlerless season where hunter opportunity was reduced in 26 counties from that of 2004. The antlerless season was open in 2005

for 22 days on private land in 25 counties. In 12 counties and portions of four more, the season was open for 18 days on private land with a one deer bag limit and limited licenses available in 6 of the counties. The season was closed in 14 counties and portions of four counties. The antlerless season was closed on the vast majority of National Forest land (Table 6) and open for 6 days on 22 State owned or leased Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's). Qualifying youth and Class Q License (physically challenged) holders had an additional three-day antlerless-only season on private land and 22 WMA's in counties open to the traditional antlerless season. The 2005 antlerless season harvest was the lowest since 1994, sixteenth highest on record, and 41% less than the five-year average antlerless harvest of 80,038. In 10 counties where the antlerless hunting opportunity was reduced to a one deer bag limit and the season shortened by 3 days, antlerless deer harvest fell by 44% compared to 2004 records. The 2005 archery season harvest of 21,949 recorded deer decreased 16% from that of the 2004 archery season. This year's archery harvest was fifteenth highest on record and 31% below the five-year average of 31,737 (Table 3). The 2005 muzzleloader season harvest was 9,064, a decrease of 40% from 2004, 38% below the five-year average harvest of 14,510, and the fifteenth highest harvest recorded for this season (Table 7).

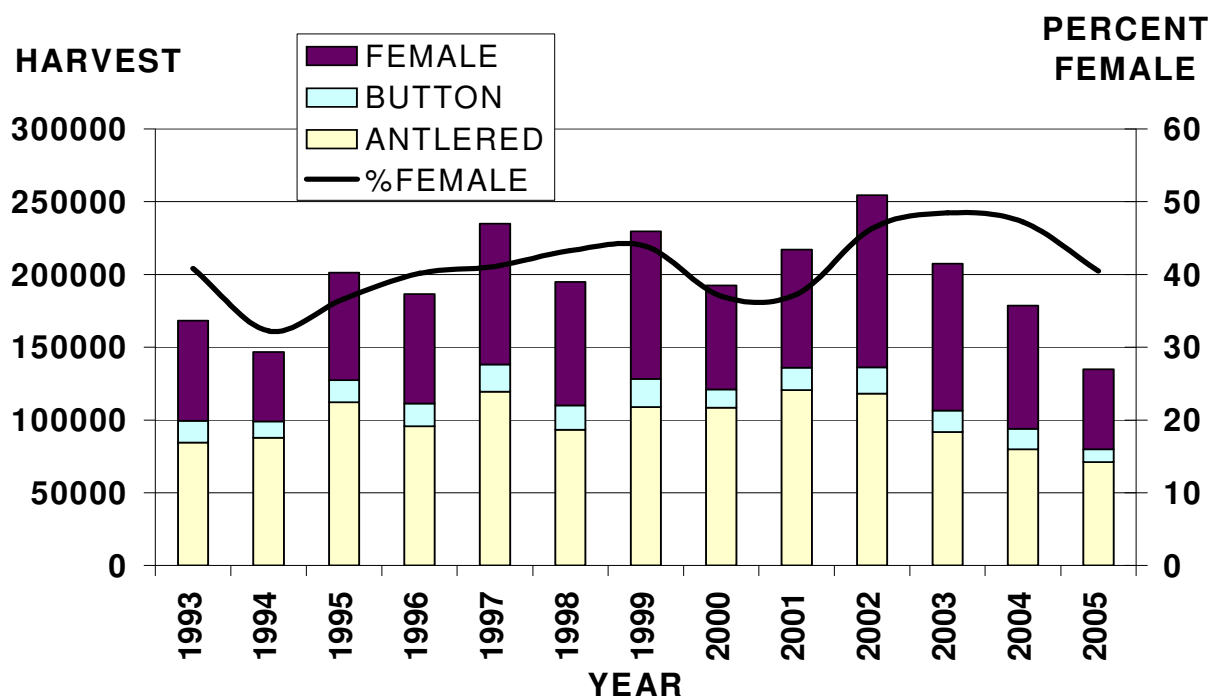
In 2005, hunting on Sunday was permissible in West Virginia for the fifth year. In 2001 all counties were open to hunting on Sunday. In 2002, 20 of 55 counties were open to hunting on Sunday. In 2003, 2004, and 2005, 14 of 55 counties were open to hunting on Sunday. These 14 counties had six additional days available for deer hunting. All six days were open for archery hunters who recorded taking 331 deer on Sundays, or one and one half percent of the total 2005 archery harvest. One Sunday was open for firearms deer hunting, the Sunday after Thanksgiving November 27, and 199 deer were recorded as harvested.

In the 2005 deer season, of the 51 counties open to the two-week bucks-only season, the desired buck harvest per square mile was exceeded in 15 counties, or 16% of the deer habitat in the state, indicating the deer population needs to be reduced. Of the remaining 36 counties, 26 were lower than the desired harvest and 10 were within one buck per square mile of the desired buck harvest for the county. In contrast to 2004, 21 counties, or 24% of deer habitat in the state, were above the desired buck harvest per square mile and of the remaining 30 counties, 28 were lower than the desired harvest and two were at the desired buck harvest per square mile. The success of past antlerless deer harvests has helped lower the number of counties in 2005 that exceed the desired buck harvest per square mile and further progress toward lower deer populations will eventually lead to the deer habitat in the state being better able to provide food for the deer population.

The harvest of antlerless deer is the key to healthier, heavier, and more productive deer herds. This is because there are natural limits to the number of deer the land can support. When these natural limits are exceeded deer body weights, reproductive rates, antler development, and herd health declines, including an increased likelihood that deer will die over winter. If deer exceed natural limits long enough habitat quality is reduced which produces a long-term reduction in the natural limit of deer the land can support. To avoid these problems a minimum of 70 females harvested for every 100 bucks is generally required just to stabilize a deer herd. If a decrease in the herd is warranted the percentage of females needs to be above 40%. Prior to the 2000 deer season, West Virginia's deer herd was on track for a better healthier herd. Decreases in antlerless harvest in the 2000 and 2001 deer seasons temporarily slowed progress toward a better deer herd but, with

landowners and hunters in the 2002 through 2004 deer season recognizing the need to harvest antlerless deer, the pace toward a better deer herd quickened. From 2002 through 2004 deer seasons the recorded antlerless deer harvest exceeded the traditional firearm antlered buck harvest. The percentage of does in the statewide harvest has exceeded 40% for the 2002 through 2004 seasons even though the total harvest in 2003 and 2004 declined. In 2005 the reductions in hunter opportunity to harvest antlerless deer resulted in a lower total deer harvest and a reduction of the percentage of female deer in the harvest. Hunter and landowner efforts to manage the state's deer herd by participating and encouraging antlerless deer harvest where needed will benefit not only the deer herd, but all wildlife dependent on our state's woodland habitat.

WV DEER HARVEST



Special Deer Management Areas

In 2005, hunters took 257 deer in the special urban deer season. This special archery deer-hunting season is available to incorporated cities and homeowner associations, which may open 14 days prior to the opening of archery season and close December 31. During this special season two deer may be taken which do not count toward the regular archery deer season bag limit. In 2005, three cities reported harvesting 235 deer, which are, included in Tables 3, 4, 8, and 9. In addition, 22 deer were harvested during urban deer archery hunts conducted by two homeowner associations. This is the second year that homeowner associations have taken advantage of the special urban archery deer season to address deer population management. For information regarding implementing a special season contact your local city government or homeowners association.

The antlerless deer harvest (Tables 5, 6, 8, and 9) do not include 55 deer harvested during the twelfth year of a controlled six day deer hunt at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) and 37 deer harvested during a controlled deer hunt conducted on the grounds of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Conservation Training Center. The NRAO continues to set the example to demonstrate that deer hunting and thus good land stewardship is compatible with almost any other activities taking place on an area.

In the special youth and Class Q deer season 2,631 antlerless deer were reported harvested and are included in antlerless deer harvest tables 5, 6, 8, and 9. The special youth and Class Q season was open on private land in any county, or portion thereof, open to the antlerless deer season and on 22 DNR Wildlife Management Areas across the state on October 29, 2005 and again December 26 and 27, 2005. This was the eighth year this special season was held. To participate hunters had to hold a Class Q license or be a youth at least 10 and no more than 14 years of age on the day of the season, and be accompanied by a licensed adult at least 21 years of age. The daily bag limit was one antlerless deer, which did not count against the hunter's annual antlerless deer season bag limit. Youth and Class Q hunters harvested 2,189 deer on October 29th and an additional 212 and 230 deer on December 26th and 27th, respectively. The recorded harvest for the 2005 special Youth and Class Q deer season decreased by 45% from that of 2004. The reduced harvest can be attributed to the decrease in counties open to antlerless deer season. The harvest for the second and third day of the season was down 55% and 56%, respectively, from reported harvest in 2004.

Deer Hunting Outlook

Recent legislative efforts at both the federal and state level regarding deer maintained in privately owned pens threaten both traditional agriculture and free-ranging deer populations in the state. In West Virginia, these efforts have included recent efforts to remove West Virginia Division of Natural Resources' (DNR) regulatory authority over individuals possessing live deer in pens as well as attempts to legalize the sale of venison. The principal threat of such legislation stems from the commerce of live animals that lack any federally approved biologics commonly used by domestic livestock for disease prevention and control. This gamble with animal health by an industry built around providing elk and deer to be shot in a pen, commonly referred to as a "canned hunt," jeopardizes the hunting heritage of an estimated 11 million elk and deer hunters nationwide as well as the \$27.9 billion annual economic impact associated with deer hunting. In addition, these initiatives by agricultural interests go against the basic tenets that wildlife species are not to be privately owned commodities for commercial sale. These misguided attempts are a direct threat to the four principles that have made our state's and national wildlife management programs so successful: public ownership of wildlife; elimination of markets in the meat, parts, and products of game mammals and birds; allocation of the material benefits of wildlife by law, not by the marketplace, birthright, land ownership, or social position; and prohibition of frivolous killing of wildlife.

The DNR does welcome scientifically sound efforts by federal and state agriculture to eliminate CWD in captive cervids in order to reduce the risk of spreading CWD. CWD is difficult to control in captive deer and elk; it is greatly compounded when dealing with CWD control in wild

populations. West Virginia citizens should be afforded protection from threats associated with CWD and other diseases transferable from deer and elk pens to our state's free-ranging publicly owned deer herd. This protection is especially critical with the ongoing efforts by DNR, landowners, and hunters to control the spread of CWD in free-ranging deer near Slanesville located in Hampshire County.

For more information on CWD and the current status of the disease in Hampshire County, West Virginia contact any DNR office or visit the Wildlife Resources web site www.wvdnr.gov.

In the 2006 antlerless deer season the DNR proposes that all of 34 counties and portions of 3 additional counties be open to antlerless deer Class N hunting. The DNR proposes on private land in 21 counties there be a 22-day split antlerless season, 12 days of which would be concurrent with the traditional bucks-only deer season. Private land in these 21 counties would open from November 20 through December 9, and open again December 27 through December 30. Eight additional counties, or portions thereof, would be open on private land for 18 days, November 20 through December 9, with a bag limit of one antlerless deer. All of six counties and portions of two counties are also proposed to be open for 18 days but hunters must apply for permits. All of 18 counties and portions of an additional 3 counties are proposed to be closed to antlerless Class N deer hunting. Except for Wallback WMA and Potts Creek WMA which will be closed to antlerless season and eight areas where hunters need to apply for limited antlerless deer season permits, all wildlife management areas will be open for a 6-day antlerless season and follow county deer regulations regarding antlerless season bag limit. All National Forest land in portions of Pendleton County, and all of Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas, Randolph, and Tucker counties would be closed to antlerless deer season. During the 2006 antlerless deer season the DNR proposes that in 21 counties a hunter would be able to take three antlerless deer with Class N antlerless licenses and an additional antlerless deer during muzzleloader season on an additional muzzleloader deer stamp, RM for residents and RMM for nonresident hunters. Antlerless deer will not be allowed to be taken on an unfilled RG or RGG additional deer license during the 2006 antlerless deer season or muzzleloader season. Thus, the maximum total season deer bag limit that can be taken on antlerless Class N licenses in 2006 and maximum total deer bag limit during muzzleloader season is proposed to remain the same as that of 2005; however, the maximum total number of antlerless deer that can be taken during the antlerless deer season has been reduced by one. Again, as in 2005, a split three-day Special Youth and Class Q antlerless deer season is proposed to be held on October 28 and December 25 and 26 on 21 wildlife management areas and on private land in 37 counties or portions thereof open to antlerless (Class N) deer hunting.

White-tailed deer hunting season regulations for 2006 will be published and available to hunters in July of 2006. This newsprint-like pamphlet contains complete information on gun, archery, muzzleloading, and antlerless deer hunting, plus other hunting regulations on turkey, bear, boar, and small game. Hunters will be able to obtain a copy from any DNR office or any business that sells West Virginia hunting licenses or visiting the Wildlife Resources Section web site at www.wvdnr.gov.

Table 1. West Virginia antlered buck harvest, 2001-2005.

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Barbour	1,716	1,816	1,317	1,311	1,138
Brooke	568	537	543	538	477
Hancock	489	492	491	462	452
Harrison	2,144	2,340	1,651	1,650	1,494
Marion	1,641	1,826	1,346	1,446	1,119
Marshall	2,193	2,262	1,778	1,719	1,593
Monongalia	2,274	2,399	1,867	1,808	1,683
Ohio	840	786	675	527	473
Preston	3,126	3,658	2,561	2,041	2,254
Taylor	980	1,087	816	802	683
Tucker	1,508	1,617	932	626	733
Wetzel	2,734	2,706	2,068	1,952	1,672
Dist. I Subtotal	20,213	21,526	16,045	14,882	13,771
Berkeley	1,023	1,100	984	836	869
Grant	2,439	2,344	1,875	1,352	1,472
Hampshire	3,843	3,627	2,726	2,233	2,019
Hardy	3,338	3,193	2,565	2,117	1,961
Jefferson	631	616	630	685	651
Mineral	2,100	1,946	1,598	1,312	1,255
Morgan	1,153	1,109	861	680	802
Pendleton	2,591	2,517	1,808	1,443	1,484
Dist. II Subtotal	17,118	16,452	13,047	10,658	10,513
Braxton	2,847	2,749	1,796	1,539	1,244
Clay	864	816	660	472	370
Lewis	2,766	2,925	2,044	1,838	1,485
Nicholas	1,552	1,718	1,401	1,091	1,009
Pocahontas	2,717	2,638	1,570	1,057	1,167
Randolph	3,582	3,871	2,023	1,357	1,447
Upshur	2,046	2,327	1,461	1,312	1,164
Webster	1,696	1,669	1,024	800	753
Dist. III Subtotal	18,070	18,713	11,979	9,466	8,639
Fayette	1,474	1,532	1,087	812	728
Greenbrier	3,237	3,277	2,278	1,840	1,763
McDowell	0	0	0	0	0
Mercer	723	837	611	509	451
Monroe	2,330	2,684	1,725	1,472	1,308
Raleigh	863	897	753	602	502
Summers	1,707	1,645	1,042	807	730
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. IV Subtotal	10,334	10,872	7,496	6,042	5,482
Boone	807	699	688	584	454
Cabell	1,231	875	809	773	577
Kanawha	1,864	1,523	1,336	1,077	877
Lincoln	1,600	1,343	1,005	944	596
Logan	0	0	0	0	0
Mason	2,979	2,295	2,286	2,295	2,146
Mingo	0	0	0	0	0
Putnam	1,851	1,485	1,267	1,206	993
Wayne	1,534	1,031	995	875	627
Dist. V. Subtotal	11,866	9,251	8,386	7,754	6,270
Calhoun	1,642	1,611	1,212	1,125	859
Doddridge	2,210	2,235	1,667	1,396	1,033
Gilmer	2,114	1,883	1,388	1,229	981
Jackson	3,148	2,402	2,178	2,289	2,074
Pleasants	799	688	580	574	452
Ritchie	3,088	3,056	2,275	2,000	1,495
Roane	2,659	2,624	2,020	1,909	1,616
Tyler	1,944	1,782	1,540	1,470	1,139
Wirt	1,756	1,475	1,299	1,234	928
Wood	2,414	1,985	2,016	1,845	1,649
Dist. VI Subtotal	21,774	19,741	16,175	15,071	12,226
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	99,375	96,555	73,128	63,873	56,901

Table 2. Antlered buck gun harvest by locality in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Monongahela National Forest					
Beaverdam	228	271	101	32	51
Blackwater	297	294	172	117	204
Cheat	270	305	117	91	111
Cranberry	491	395	237	181	168
Little River	715	610	268	178	255
Neola	430	292	200	168	188
Otter Creek	270	237	126	97	108
Potomac	913	731	431	324	322
Rimel	261	242	406	132	143
Tea Creek	323	236	111	55	72
Subtotal	4,198	3,613	2,169	1,375	1,622
George Washington National Forest					
Cove Creek	4	0	0	0	1
Shenandoah	180	122	103	97	143
Wardensville	450	418	312	283	272
Subtotal	634	540	415	380	416
Jefferson National Forest					
Potts Creek	158	62	41	34	37
Subtotal	158	62	41	34	37
State Owned or Leased					
Allegheny	12	10	7	3	7
Amherst/Plymouth	26	10	5	7	10
Bear Rocks	3	4	11	3	3
Beckys Creek	7	4	4	0	0
Beech Fork	27	27	16	25	22
Beury Mountain	18	0	3	4	2
Big Ditch	0	6	0	2	2
Big Ugly	37	2	6	4	2
Bluestone	220	123	51	41	65
Briary Mountain	1	7	1	1	0
Burches Run	0	1	0	0	0
Burnsville	140	146	89	72	52
Cabwaylingo State Forest	9	9	5	2	2
Calvin Price State Forest	59	18	17	15	11
Camp Creek State Forest	38	23	7	15	14
Castleman Run	2	10	3	11	6
Center Branch	8	8	6	0	4
Conaway Run	9	10	7	4	6
Coopers Rock State Forest	136	141	104	68	95
Cornstalk, Chief	133	133	92	106	95
Cotton Hill	0	0	1	0	0
Cross Creek	9	21	21	31	19
Dunkards Creek	0	1	2	1	0
East Lynn	49	20	18	11	15
Edwards Run	3	6	0	4	2
Elk Fork	2	0	0	0	0
Elk River	149	107	53	41	44
Fork Creek	23	25	21	16	18

Table 2. Continued

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
State Owned or Leased					
Fort Mill Ridge	1	0	0	1	0
Frozen Camp	16	16	15	2	28
Greenbottom	1	2	1	0	1
Greenbrier State Forest	44	26	15	10	14
Handley	13	9	11	2	3
Hillcrest	7	13	15	10	0
Hughes River	93	82	63	50	48
Huttonsville	18	17	19	14	0
Jug	57	38	36	35	25
Kanawha State Forest	32	16	13	6	9
Kumbrabow State Forest	51	35	14	11	6
Lewis Wetzel	159	158	131	92	70
McClintic	16	12	9	14	20
Meadow River	0	0	0	2	4
Mill Creek	0	1	0	0	2
Moncove	16	4	5	0	1
Nathaniel Mountain	85	74	38	39	36
New River Gorge	61	39	19	16	35
Pedlar	0	0	0	0	2
Pleasants Creek	4	6	5	6	8
Plum Orchard	5	0	4	6	0
Pruntytown	14	19	6	16	16
Ritchie Mines	12	9	9	9	10
Sand Hill	7	14	0	0	0
Seneca State Forest	80	55	35	26	41
Shannondale	26	19	14	30	15
Short Mountain	99	119	53	49	56
Sleepy Creek	280	292	166	115	119
Snake Hill	10	9	7	6	4
South Branch	0	2	0	2	0
Stonecoal	34	25	17	17	9
Stonewall Jackson	239	232	149	126	106
Stumptown	2	4	0	0	2
Summersville	10	34	29	20	13
Tate Lohr	1	1	0	0	1
Thorn Creek	0	0	0	0	1
Underwood	6	22	20	18	20
Upper Mud River	4	3	1	7	3
Valley Bend Wetland	0	1	0	0	0
Wallback	4	2	0	2	8
Widmyer	0	2	1	1	0
Woodrum	0	0	0	0	1
Subtotal	2,627	2,284	1,470	1,247	1,233
Private Land	91,735	90,047	69,021	60,831	53,593
Unknown	23	9	12	6	0
State Total	99,375	96,555	73,128	63,873	56,901

Table 3. West Virginia white-tailed deer bow harvest, 2001-2005.

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Barbour	562	573	474	525	394
Brooke	384	462	355	357	315
Hancock	449	376	408	459	409
Harrison	724	716	554	527	507
Marion	600	582	482	521	430
Marshall	545	580	451	506	454
Monongalia	898	863	748	709	686
Ohio	472	398	334	273	257
Preston	1,376	1,674	1,279	1075	1012
Taylor	291	343	277	264	233
Tucker	803	836	540	428	355
Wetzel	500	496	401	431	318
Dist. I Subtotal	7,604	7,899	6,303	6,075	5,370
Berkeley	384	484	438	399	406
Grant	653	685	539	471	388
Hampshire	539	583	480	350	312
Hardy	747	794	642	457	394
Jefferson	317	352	363	353	380
Mineral	424	485	358	340	290
Morgan	298	280	253	163	149
Pendleton	599	594	440	371	315
Dist. II Subtotal	3,961	4,257	3,513	2,904	2,634
Braxton	843	892	604	546	396
Clay	426	426	344	278	212
Lewis	699	728	485	524	470
Nicholas	910	1,297	1,094	833	660
Pocahontas	721	825	485	353	284
Randolph	1,542	1,682	1,208	864	660
Upshur	747	804	637	571	476
Webster	848	1,059	724	604	399
Dist. III Subtotal	6,736	7,713	5,581	4,573	3,557
Fayette	884	1,119	911	616	464
Greenbrier	997	1,280	1,009	722	614
McDowell	461	506	763	692	480
Mercer	578	680	598	451	353
Monroe	834	876	619	505	451
Raleigh	677	816	666	537	467
Summers	678	847	536	411	411
Wyoming	304	383	605	493	377
Dist. IV Subtotal	5,413	6,507	5,707	4,427	3,617
Boone	441	480	383	294	215
Cabell	504	439	385	326	277
Kanawha	961	1,004	787	716	566
Lincoln	645	597	432	389	246
Logan	390	483	675	541	396
Mason	1,063	842	723	767	780
Mingo	234	291	354	292	177
Putnam	736	699	542	550	449
Wayne	467	422	406	348	267
Dist. V. Subtotal	5,441	5,257	4,687	4,223	3,373
Calhoun	345	442	256	344	208
Doddridge	447	475	321	249	218
Gilmer	488	415	254	264	212
Jackson	921	782	588	677	630
Pleasants	167	132	99	102	91
Ritchie	706	725	510	479	430
Roane	736	843	551	541	433
Tyler	443	471	370	397	310
Wirt	569	489	367	341	273
Wood	795	737	683	631	593
Dist. VI Subtotal	5,617	5,511	3,999	4,025	3,398
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	34,772	37,144	29,790	26,227	21,949

Table 4. Deer bow harvest by locality in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Monongahela National Forest					
Beaverdam	64	81	29	40	34
Blackwater	150	155	96	80	96
Cheat	111	122	62	54	49
Cranberry	145	201	159	106	61
Little River	199	244	86	70	63
Neola	40	88	47	28	14
Otter Creek	112	104	62	43	29
Potomac	233	256	144	127	124
Rimel	38	40	20	16	18
Tea Creek	59	61	26	22	18
Subtotal	1,151	1,352	731	586	506
George Washington National Forest					
Cove Creek	0	1	0	0	0
Shenandoah	68	51	31	24	25
Wardensville	91	101	68	48	58
Subtotal	159	153	99	72	83
Jefferson National Forest					
Potts Creek	38	23	12	11	14
Subtotal	38	23	12	11	14
State Owned or Leased					
Allegheny	1	2	0	1	1
Amherst/Plymouth	9	0	8	3	7
Anawalt	0	2	0	1	1
Bear Rocks	1	1	0	3	0
Beckys Creek	0	2	2	0	2
Beech Fork	20	18	4	3	8
Berwind	32	32	50	10	9
Beury Mountain	7	6	4	1	8
Big Ditch	1	2	3	0	0
Big Ugly	11	2	0	1	2
Bluestone	144	158	58	55	87
Briary Mountain	1	1	1	0	0
Burches Run	0	0	0	0	1
Burnsville	48	56	22	30	30
Cabwaylingo State Forest	3	1	1	2	0
Calvin Price State Forest	8	7	1	0	2
Camp Creek State Forest	12	24	1	6	3
Castleman Run	6	0	4	4	1
Center Branch	2	2	4	1	3
Conaway Run	0	1	0	2	0
Coopers Rock State Forest	42	54	39	33	31
Cornstalk, Chief	58	45	15	29	35
Cross Creek	0	10	8	9	7
Dunkards Fork	0	0	0	1	0
East Lynn	2	9	9	2	3
Edwards Run	4	0	0	1	2
Elk River	0	58	29	19	27
Fork Creek	56	10	19	5	3

Table 4. Continued

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
State Owned or Leased					
Fort Mill Ridge	5	0	1	0	0
Frozen Camp	0	3	0	13	2
Greenbottom	2	2	4	1	4
Greenbrier State Forest	8	13	6	2	0
Handley	8	4	1	2	1
Hilbert	1	0	0	0	0
Hillcrest	47	33	37	39	22
Horse Creek	2	4	5	1	1
Hughes River	1	5	10	6	22
Huttonsville	12	7	5	4	2
Jug	4	0	1	11	17
Kanawha State Forest	12	0	11	6	5
Kumbrabow State Forest	31	24	12	6	3
Lantz Farm	0	0	0	0	1
Laurel Lake	15	3	20	19	5
Lewis Wetzel	34	37	16	13	5
McClintic	19	26	14	23	26
Meadow River	0	0	0	0	2
Moncove	0	0	3	0	1
Morris Creek	0	0	0	0	1
Nathaniel Mountain	5	2	4	2	2
New River Gorge	25	5	1	17	12
Panther State Forest	18	15	17	8	11
Pedlar	0	0	0	0	1
Pleasants Creek	6	9	8	3	7
Plum Orchard	1	3	1	0	8
Pruntytown	3	4	3	3	4
RD Bailey	37	49	94	42	54
Ritchie Mines	0	0	3	2	2
Seneca State Forest	23	18	2	4	6
Shannondale	19	26	24	28	21
Short Mountain	11	12	9	9	6
Sleepy Creek	47	54	35	21	31
Snake Hill	10	7	5	8	3
South Branch	0	1	0	0	1
Stonecoal	4	5	2	0	5
Stonewall Jackson	76	96	57	63	64
Stumptown	0	0	0	0	2
Summersville	21	19	26	15	9
Tate Lohr	3	3	0	0	0
Teter Creek	0	1	0	0	0
Tug Fork	0	9	2	0	0
Turkey Run	8	0	0	0	0
Underwood	3	6	5	0	4
Upper Mud River	0	1	0	0	1
Wallback	1	5	2	0	6
Widmyer	1	4	0	0	0
Woodrum	0	0	0	0	1
Subtotal	991	1,018	728	593	654
Private Land	32,427	34,580	28,219	24,959	20,692
Unknown	6	18	1	6	0
State Total	34,772	37,144	29,790	26,227	21,949

Table 5. West Virginia antlerless gun harvest, 2001-2005.

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Barbour	1,678	2,506	1,914	1,693	1,025
Brooke	681	971	748	699	764
Hancock	574	800	728	653	675
Harrison	2,110	3,084	2,182	2,098	1,858
Marion	1,540	2,224	1,716	1,731	1,367
Marshall	1,825	2,519	2,045	1,658	1,794
Monongalia	1,962	2,698	2,337	2,138	2,063
Ohio	792	1,011	803	625	724
Preston	3,310	5,113	4,192	2,825	1,820
Taylor	930	1,408	1,188	959	763
Tucker	439	595	773	562	0
Wetzel	2,331	3,137	2,497	2,323	1,734
Dist. I Subtotal	18,172	26,066	21,123	17,964	14,587
Berkeley	581	874	1,019	790	815
Grant	1,492	2,408	1,961	1,458	846
Hampshire	2,539	3,554	2,908	2,265	1,651
Hardy	2,326	3,193	2,565	2,221	1,610
Jefferson	442	570	696	601	619
Mineral	1,269	2,140	1,644	1,312	1,277
Morgan	843	1,181	1,045	772	738
Pendleton	1,329	2,017	1,567	1,223	198
Dist. II Subtotal	10,821	15,937	13,405	10,642	7,754
Braxton	2,035	3,311	3,033	2,604	421
Clay	0	154	231	190	0
Lewis	2,777	3,945	2,908	2,555	2,371
Nicholas	0	0	915	543	0
Pocahontas	682	2,047	1,459	874	0
Randolph	1,115	2,435	2,261	1,494	0
Upshur	2,420	3,725	2,696	2,107	1,197
Webster	365	708	1,372	344	0
Dist. III Subtotal	9,394	16,325	14,875	10,711	3,989
Fayette	280	723	1,204	922	0
Greenbrier	788	1,953	3,514	2,455	489
McDowell	0	0	0	0	0
Mercer	100	312	572	650	0
Monroe	1,320	3,652	2,641	1,973	1,071
Raleigh	143	310	886	617	0
Summers	640	2,506	1,647	1,029	276
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. IV Subtotal	3,271	9,456	10,464	7,646	1,836
Boone	0	0	316	269	0
Cabell	791	1,012	823	809	502
Kanawha	920	1,421	1,565	758	210
Lincoln	1,224	1,769	1,374	1,038	141
Logan	0	0	0	0	0
Mason	2,447	2,937	2,545	2,506	2,719
Mingo	0	0	0	0	0
Putnam	1,463	1,894	1,526	1,403	1,146
Wayne	445	593	867	823	132
Dist. V. Subtotal	7,290	9,626	9,016	7,606	4,850
Calhoun	1,398	2,152	1,360	1,369	780
Doddridge	1,793	2,585	1,876	1,895	1,237
Gilmer	2,130	2,636	1,692	1,620	895
Jackson	2,752	3,400	2,636	2,599	2,534
Pleasants	625	867	628	635	547
Ritchie	2,843	3,830	2,953	2,539	2,086
Roane	2,689	3,880	2,794	2,568	1,885
Tyler	1,856	2,290	1,953	1,942	1,372
Wirt	1,760	2,357	1,901	1,807	941
Wood	2,143	2,788	2,389	2,319	2,154
Dist. VI Subtotal	19,989	26,785	20,182	19,293	14,431
Unknown	142	4	0	0	0
State Total	69,079	104,199	89,065	73,862	47,447

Table 6. Antlerless deer harvest by locality in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Monongahela National Forest					
Beaverdam	21	69	19	14	0
Blackwater	73	75	67	56	12
Cheat	44	78	27	27	0
Cranberry	33	61	79	32	0
Little River	29	62	45	23	0
Neola	28	64	27	24	0
Otter Creek	43	85	42	35	0
Potomac	221	215	97	69	28
Rimel	12	31	25	7	0
Tea Creek	21	27	19	11	0
Subtotal	525	767	447	298	40
George Washington National Forest					
Cove Creek	1	0	0	0	0
Shenandoah	46	55	23	13	2
Wardensville	120	101	86	58	82
Subtotal	167	156	109	71	84
Jefferson National Forest					
Potts Creek	86	76	50	24	0
Subtotal	86	76	50	24	0
State Owned or Leased					
Allegheny	3	3	0	3	2
Amherst/Plymouth	2	2	2	5	3
Andrew Rowan	0	0	0	0	1
Bear Rocks	1	0	3	2	0
Beckys Creek	1	2	2	0	0
Beech Fork	9	7	13	15	11
Beury Mountain	0	3	5	7	0
Big Ditch	6	0	2	1	0
Big Ugly	3	4	1	0	0
Bluestone	50	155	24	54	36
Briary Mountain	1	1	1	2	1
Burnsville	84	98	44	61	0
Cabwaylingo State Forest	1	0	1	0	0
Calvin Price State Forest	1	2	0	0	0
Camp Creek State Forest	0	0	0	2	0
Castleman Run	0	3	2	4	12
Center Branch	1	3	6	1	2
Conaway Run	12	4	2	3	4
Coopers Rock State Forest	42	32	58	37	46
Cornstalk, Chief	27	29	31	31	27
Cross Creek	0	6	4	9	7
East Lynn	0	5	3	4	0
Edwards Run	3	4	8	1	2
Elk Fork	0	0	0	0	2
Elk River	25	48	23	20	0
Fork Creek	0	0	35	9	0
Fort Mill Ridge	0	0	0	1	1
Frozen Camp	17	22	10	15	22

Table 6. Continued

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
State Owned or Leased					
Greenbottom	2	2	2	3	1
Greenbrier State Forest	0	4	14	7	0
Handley	0	8	1	2	0
Hilbert	0	1	0	0	0
Hillcrest	5	8	10	11	17
Hughes River	176	189	74	93	78
Huttonsville	0	15	5	7	0
Jug	27	27	13	10	12
Kanawha State Forest	0	0	1	0	0
Kumbrabow State Forest	6	14	6	2	0
Lewis Wetzel	37	135	138	100	81
McClintic	91	96	68	77	123
Meadow River	1	5	4	1	4
Mill Creek	1	1	1	0	1
Moncove	15	6	3	0	0
Nathaniel Mountain	4	1	6	3	5
New River Gorge	6	3	2	1	0
Pedlar	0	0	0	0	3
Pleasants Creek	6	1	4	6	12
Plum Orchard	0	0	2	0	0
Pruntytown	5	3	16	6	10
Ritchie Mines	6	9	1	3	5
Sand Hill	2	3	0	0	0
Seneca State Forest	7	12	0	1	0
Shannondale	3	4	18	6	2
Short Mountain	24	16	22	12	14
Sleepy Creek	71	53	69	25	41
Snake Hill	5	0	4	1	1
Southbranch	0	0	0	0	2
Stonecoal	8	13	6	16	15
Stonewall Jackson	120	193	106	112	135
Stumptown	5	10	0	2	10
Summersville	0	0	9	0	0
Tate Lohr	0	0	1	0	0
Teter Creek	0	2	0	3	0
Underwood	0	2	0	1	1
Upper Mud River	1	12	2	5	0
Widmyer	0	0	1	0	0
Subtotal	923	1,281	889	803	752
Private Land	67,362	101,912	87,564	72,661	46,553
Unknown	16	7	6	5	18
State Total	69,079	104,199	89,065	73,862	47,447

Table 7. Muzzleloader deer seasons in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Barbour	251	263	308	333	201
Brooke	50	57	126	122	93
Hancock	91	110	210	149	166
Harrison	376	372	402	395	286
Marion	230	242	286	308	197
Marshall	308	321	402	277	362
Monongalia	275	345	433	415	324
Ohio	114	114	144	117	123
Preston	452	617	516	512	354
Taylor	135	189	231	175	136
Tucker	254	244	257	269	23
Wetzel	451	442	460	524	248
Dist. I Subtotal	2,987	3,316	3,775	3,596	2,513
Berkeley	103	140	166	143	162
Grant	391	514	392	352	209
Hampshire	388	425	399	348	266
Hardy	439	498	430	367	262
Jefferson	110	102	89	131	97
Mineral	209	248	188	162	190
Morgan	141	174	138	109	95
Pendleton	321	332	268	232	163
Dist. II Subtotal	2,102	2,433	2,070	1,844	1,444
Braxton	687	990	549	567	463
Clay	14	47	59	94	12
Lewis	380	528	510	497	412
Nicholas	11	25	513	572	37
Pocahontas	440	632	324	243	34
Randolph	826	1081	600	545	34
Upshur	332	385	326	338	221
Webster	231	277	328	361	13
Dist. III Subtotal	2,921	3,965	3,209	3,217	1,226
Fayette	290	637	320	319	20
Greenbrier	496	1080	634	534	335
McDowell	0	0	0	0	0
Mercer	123	220	167	147	21
Monroe	312	487	335	273	211
Raleigh	115	213	202	141	19
Summers	275	455	303	212	196
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. IV Subtotal	1,611	3,092	1,961	1,626	802
Bonne	16	20	179	130	15
Cabell	146	132	148	148	104
Kanawha	163	221	286	179	133
Lincoln	193	221	215	176	98
Logan	0	0	0	0	0
Mason	404	340	475	454	477
Mingo	0	0	0	0	0
Putnam	230	185	257	202	192
Wayne	191	230	239	164	72
Dist. V. Subtotal	1,343	1,349	1,799	1,453	1,091
Calhoun	248	259	198	243	109
Doddridge	296	302	327	333	163
Gilmer	346	309	324	270	167
Jackson	478	423	429	439	344
Pleasants	89	123	116	102	69
Ritchie	454	529	516	476	243
Roane	414	397	318	404	211
Tyler	253	343	383	385	203
Wirt	320	300	359	291	186
Wood	327	318	488	425	293
Dist. VI Subtotal	3,225	3,303	3,458	3,368	1,988
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	14,189	17,458	16,272	15,104	9,064

Table 8. Deer mortality by type of season, 2005.

County	Buck	Antlerless	Muzzleloader	Bow	Total
Barbour	1,138	1,025	201	394	2,758
Brooke	477	764	93	315	1,649
Hancock	452	675	166	409	1,702
Harrison	1,494	1,858	286	507	4,145
Marion	1,119	1,367	197	430	3,113
Marshall	1,593	1,794	362	454	4,203
Monongalia	1,683	2,063	324	686	4,756
Ohio	473	724	123	257	1,577
Preston	2,254	1,820	354	1,012	5,440
Taylor	683	763	136	233	1,815
Tucker	733	0	23	355	1,111
Wetzel	1,672	1,734	248	318	3,972
Dist. I Subtotal	13,771	14,587	2,513	5,370	36,241
Berkeley	869	815	162	406	2,252
Grant	1,472	846	209	388	2,915
Hampshire	2,019	1,651	266	312	4,248
Hardy	1,961	1,610	262	394	4,227
Jefferson	651	619	97	380	1,747
Mineral	1,255	1,277	190	290	3,012
Morgan	802	738	95	149	1,784
Pendleton	1,484	198	163	315	2,160
Dist. II Subtotal	10,513	7,754	1,444	2,634	22,345
Braxton	1,244	421	463	396	2,524
Clay	370	0	12	212	594
Lewis	1,485	2,371	412	470	4,738
Nicholas	1,009	0	37	660	1,706
Pocahontas	1,167	0	34	284	1,485
Randolph	1,447	0	34	660	2,141
Upshur	1,164	1,197	221	476	3,058
Webster	753	0	13	399	1,165
Dist. III Subtotal	8,639	3,989	1,226	3,557	17,411
Fayette	728	0	20	464	1,212
Greenbrier	1,763	489	335	614	3,201
McDowell	0	0	0	480	480
Mercer	451	0	21	353	825
Monroe	1,308	1,071	211	451	3,041
Raleigh	502	0	19	467	988
Summers	730	276	196	411	1,613
Wyoming	0	0	0	377	377
Dist. IV Subtotal	5,482	1,836	802	3,617	11,737
Bonne	454	0	15	215	684
Cabell	577	502	104	277	1,460
Kanawha	877	210	133	566	1,786
Lincoln	596	141	98	246	1,081
Logan	0	0	0	396	396
Mason	2,146	2,719	477	780	6,122
Mingo	0	0	0	177	177
Putnam	993	1,146	192	449	2,780
Wayne	627	132	72	267	1,098
Dist. V. Subtotal	6,270	4,850	1,091	3,373	15,584
Calhoun	859	780	109	208	1,956
Doddridge	1,033	1,237	163	218	2,651
Gilmer	981	895	167	212	2,255
Jackson	2,074	2,534	344	630	5,582
Pleasants	452	547	69	91	1,159
Ritchie	1,495	2,086	243	430	4,254
Roane	1,616	1,885	211	433	4,145
Tyler	1,139	1,372	203	310	3,024
Wirt	928	941	186	273	2,328
Wood	1,649	2,154	293	593	4,689
Dist. VI Subtotal	12,226	14,431	1,988	3,398	32,043
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	56,901	47,447	9,064	21,949	135,361

Table 9. West Virginia 2005 deer kill per square mile of habitat by season (calculated using deer open by county for season, all seasons kill based on total deer harvest).

County	Area	Buck	Antlerless	Muzzleloader	Bow	Total
Barbour	324	3.51	3.16	0.62	1.22	8.51
Brooke	76	6.28	10.05	1.22	4.14	21.70
Hancock	61	7.41	11.07	2.72	6.70	27.90
Harrison	390	3.83	4.76	0.73	1.30	10.63
Marion	273	4.10	5.01	0.72	1.58	11.40
Marshall	270	5.90	6.64	1.34	1.68	15.57
Monongalia	312	5.39	6.61	1.04	2.20	15.24
Ohio	83	5.70	8.72	1.48	3.10	19.00
Preston	612	3.68	2.97	0.58	1.65	8.89
Taylor	157	4.35	4.86	0.87	1.48	11.56
Tucker	412	1.78	0.00	0.06	0.86	2.70
Wetzel	353	4.74	4.91	0.70	0.90	11.25
Dist. I Subtotal	3,323	4.14	5.01	0.76	1.62	10.91
Berkeley	294	2.96	2.77	0.55	1.38	7.66
Grant	474	3.11	1.78	0.44	0.82	6.15
Hampshire	621	3.25	2.66	0.43	0.50	6.84
Hardy	567	3.46	2.84	0.46	0.69	7.46
Jefferson	192	3.39	3.22	0.51	1.98	9.10
Mineral	318	3.95	4.02	0.60	0.91	9.47
Morgan	222	3.61	3.32	0.43	0.67	8.04
Pendleton	689	2.15	0.29	0.24	0.46	3.13
Dist. II Subtotal	3,377	3.11	2.39	0.43	0.78	6.62
Braxton	499	2.49	0.84	0.93	0.79	5.06
Clay	336	1.10	0.00	0.04	0.63	1.77
Lewis	381	3.90	6.22	1.08	1.23	12.44
Nicholas	616	1.64	0.00	0.06	1.07	2.77
Pocahontas	930	1.25	0.00	0.04	0.31	1.60
Randolph	1015	1.43	0.00	0.03	0.65	2.11
Upshur	340	3.42	3.52	0.65	1.40	8.99
Webster	544	1.38	0.00	0.02	0.73	2.14
Dist. III Subtotal	4,661	1.85	3.27	0.26	0.76	3.74
Fayette	594	1.23	0.00	0.03	0.78	2.04
Greenbrier	986	1.79	2.79	0.34	0.62	3.25
McDowell	486	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.99	0.99
Mercer	367	1.23	0.00	0.06	0.96	2.25
Monroe	466	2.81	2.30	0.45	0.97	6.53
Raleigh	548	0.92	0.00	0.03	0.85	1.80
Summers	344	2.12	0.80	0.57	1.19	4.69
Wyoming	495	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.76	0.76
Dist. IV Subtotal	4,286	1.66	1.86	0.24	0.84	2.74
Bonne	490	0.93	0.00	0.03	0.44	1.40
Cabell	247	2.34	2.03	0.42	1.12	5.91
Kanawha	804	1.09	0.81	0.17	0.70	2.22
Lincoln	424	1.41	0.33	0.23	0.58	2.55
Logan	444	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.89	0.89
Mason	407	5.27	6.68	1.17	1.92	15.04
Mingo	403	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.44	0.44
Putnam	331	3.00	3.46	0.58	1.36	8.40
Wayne	499	1.26	0.63	0.14	0.54	2.20
Dist. V. Subtotal	4,049	1.96	2.58	0.34	0.83	3.85
Calhoun	277	3.10	2.82	0.39	0.75	7.06
Doddridge	310	3.33	3.99	0.53	0.70	8.55
Gilmer	333	2.95	2.69	0.50	0.64	6.77
Jackson	452	4.59	5.61	0.76	1.39	12.35
Pleasants	119	3.80	4.60	0.58	0.76	9.74
Ritchie	439	3.41	4.75	0.55	0.98	9.69
Roane	476	3.39	3.96	0.44	0.91	8.71
Tyler	246	4.63	5.58	0.83	1.26	12.29
Wirt	232	4.00	4.06	0.80	1.18	10.03
Wood	309	5.34	6.97	0.95	1.92	15.17
Dist. VI Subtotal	3,193	3.83	4.52	0.62	1.06	10.04
Unknown	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
State Total	22,889	2.70	3.53	0.43	0.96	5.91

BIG BUCK CONTEST

**by
Eugene R. Thorn**

The West Virginia Big Buck Contest was established in 1964 to recognize sportsmen who bag extraordinarily big antlered bucks. The contest is co-sponsored by the Division of Natural Resources, the Izaak Walton League of West Virginia, and the West Virginia Bowhunter's Association.

The Boone and Crockett or Pope and Young Club scoring systems are used to score bucks depending upon method of kill. Guidelines for the annual contest are as follows:

1. The deer must have been checked at an Official Game Checking Station, and the official West Virginia Game Check Tag must be attached to the antlers.
2. A Fair Chase Affidavit must be signed and attached to the Official Score Sheet.
3. Field photos of the freshly killed deer with antlers attached must be submitted at the time of scoring for state record entries.
4. Any bow-killed buck that scores at least 125 typical or 155 non-typical, gun-killed bucks that score at least 140 typical or 165 non-typical must be scored by an Official Scorer approved by the Pope and Young or Boone and Crockett Club.

A review committee was established, by the Director of the Division of Natural Resources, to consider all deer entries to the Big Buck Contest. The committee has the power to make judgements as to the legitimacy of each entry and to accept or reject any entry in question. The West Virginia Big Buck Contest Review Committee consists of representatives from the Izaak Walton League of West Virginia, the West Virginia Bowhunter's Association, the DNR's Wildlife Resources Section and the Law Enforcement Section, and a citizen member with an interest in deer hunting.

In 2005, 236 hunters had their deer antlers scored at one of the six DNR District Offices, Field Offices, or the West Virginia Hunting and Fishing Show in Charleston (sponsored by the West Virginia Trophy Hunter's Association). There are 14 DNR Wildlife Biologists and Wildlife Managers distributed throughout the state that are certified by both the Pope and Young and Boone and Crockett Clubs and 10 private individuals certified by the Pope and Young Club as Official Scorers. In the 2005 Big Buck Contest hunters took 51 big bucks (Table 1) with gun or bow that met the score minimums, the requirements concerning Game Check Tags and Fair Chase Statements, and were not excluded for cause by the Big Buck Contest Review Committee. An additional 28 bucks from former years were scored that met the requirements for a Big Buck Certificate.

It is noteworthy that an additional 20 score-sheets that met the minimum score requirements did not have the Game Check Tag verified, or did not have a signed Fair Chase Statement attached. These are the common reasons why hunter's bucks are excluded from the contest list and do not receive a Big Buck Certificate. A good practice is to staple the Game Check Tag to the back of a

mounted head so that it is not misplaced. A hunter may only take their rack to be scored by one Official Scorer. Score shopping is prohibited by the WV Big Buck Contest and will be dealt with according to Boone & Crockett and Pope & Young guidelines. It is the hunter's responsibility to work with their Official Scorer to make sure that all documentation is completed (by the contest deadline of January 31) and sent to the Big Buck Contest Review Committee Chairman.

Ten bucks killed by gun hunters scored above 140 points typical or 165 points non-typical. In the Typical-Gun category, the winner was Walter Underwood Jr. from Mt. Hope, WV with a 12-point buck killed in Raleigh County that scored 163 $\frac{3}{8}$. There was no Non-Typical buck harvested with the gun that met the minimum score; therefore, the Non-Typical Gun category has no winner this year.

Bowhunters killed 41 deer that scored above 125 points typical or 155 points non-typical. The winner of the Typical-Bow category was Stephen Beckner of Welch, WV with a 12-point buck from McDowell County that scored 161 $\frac{6}{8}$. The Non-Typical Bow category winner was Terry Ballard of Logan, WV with a huge 18-point buck killed in Mingo County that scored 164 $\frac{4}{8}$.

The 2005 West Virginia Big Buck Contest had more deer brought in to be scored than last year. However, the number of bucks killed in 2005 that qualified for Big Buck Citations was slightly less than last year. A non-typical buck scoring 192 $\frac{6}{8}$, killed with the bow in Mingo County by Dennis Hall in 2003, broke into the list that ranks the top five buck scores in each category for all time in West Virginia. The updated all time West Virginia Big Buck Rankings are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. West Virginia Big Buck Contest, 2005 (duplicate scores listed first by harvest date then alphabetically by hunter's last name).

Name	County of Kill	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
<u>Typical – Gun</u>				
Walter Underwood, Jr.	Raleigh	11/21/05	1	163 3/8
Marlon Henry	Randolph	11/24/05	2	159 3/8
Brian Mabe	Mercer	11/21/05	3	156 7/8
Robert Workman	Raleigh	11/23/05	4	152 3/8
Raymond Zuspan	Mason	11/21/05	5	150 7/8
Christina Godbey	Roane	11/25/05	6	145 1/8
Marvin Wolfe	Kanawha	12/03/05	7	144 5/8
TJ Hesson	Mason	11/28/05	8	144 0/8
Nathan Williams	Raleigh	11/28/05	9	141 1/8
Charles Williams	Nicholas	11/23/05	10	140 6/8
<u>Non-Typical – Gun</u>				
No Entries				
<u>Typical – Bow</u>				
Stephen Beckner	McDowell	11/13/05	1	161 6/8
Jerry Morgan, Jr.	Logan	11/08/05	2	154 7/8
H. Jason Hall	Clay	11/09/05	3	153 1/8
Terry Rowh	Putnam	10/15/05	4	150 2/8
Daryll Messer	Mingo	10/27/05	5	148 7/8
Darin Haynes	McDowell	11/14/05	6	148 0/8
Steven Rowan	Wyoming	11/17/05	7	147 7/8
Mike Keith	Raleigh	11/07/05	8	147 0/8
Thomas Grant	Boone	11/17/05	9*	145 5/8
Dean Bower	Wyoming	11/23/05	9*	145 5/8
Josh Workman	Logan	11/11/05	10	144 4/8
Kevin Otey	McDowell	11/26/05	11	142 2/8
Scott Bartam	Mingo	11/14/05	12	141 0/8
Nathaniel Nay	Wyoming	11/21/05	13	140 0/8
James Hicks	McDowell	10/29/05	14	139 6/8
Edward Perkins	Mason	10/17/05	15	139 4/8
Greg Green	Wyoming	11/14/05	16	139 1/8
Mark Lafferty	Wyoming	10/29/05	17	138 5/8

Table 1. Continued

Name	County of Kill	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
<u>Typical – Bow Continued</u>				
Curtis Weaver, II	Wyoming	11/19/05	18	137 3/8
Jack Chapman	Fayette	11/02/05	19	137 0/8
Randy Kelly	Kanawha	11/07/05	20	136 2/8
Mark Delida	McDowell	11/11/05	21	135 5/8
Jeremy Hale	Mingo	11/25/05	22	134 0/8
Matt Thompson	Lincoln	10/17/05	23*	133 0/8
Terry Grace	Mingo	11/23/05	23*	133 0/8
Shaye Justice, Jr.	Wyoming	11/02/05	24*	132 2/8
Randy Searls	Mason	11/10/05	24*	132 2/8
Matthew Hayes	Tyler	11/16/05	25	132 0/8
Ricky Amos	Kanawha	11/01/05	26	131 6/8
Philip Young	Wyoming	11/11/05	27	131 4/8
Jeffrey Eddy	Wood	10/24/05	28	131 2/8
Willard Ferrell	Marion	11/11/05	29	129 4/8
Thomas Little	McDowell	12/08/05	30	128 3/8
Paul Payne	Fayette	11/18/05	31	127 4/8
Duane Surface	Wyoming	11/19/05	32	127 2/8
Brian Casto	Kanawha	10/17/05	33	126 7/8
Roy Dyson	McDowell	11/10/05	34	126 3/8
Edward Humphreys	Logan	11/13/05	35*	125 1/8
Robert Morgan	Wyoming	11/25/05	35*	125 1/8
Kevin Graham	McDowell	12/22/05	35*	125 1/8
<u>Non-Typical Bow</u>				
Terry Ballard	Mingo	11/09/05	1	164 4/8

*Scores Tied

Table 2. West Virginia Big Buck Rankings, as of January 31, 2006.

Name	County of Kill	Harvest Year	Rank	Score
<u>Typical – Gun</u>				
Junior Bailes	Nicholas	1994	1	185 4/8
William Given	Braxton	1976	2	182 3/8
Joseph Volitis	Randolph	1969	3	180 5/8
Thomas Nickholson	Lewis	1977	4	180 3/8
Wiley Dorsey	Calhoun	1991	5	179 7/8
<u>Non-Typical – Gun</u>				
Charles McLaughlin	Wayne	1997	1	231 5/8
Jess Kelly	Fayette	2002	2	220 0/8
James Pauley	Mason	1966	3	207 7/8
Jimmy Osborne	Boone	1965	4	207 0/8
Ed Bailey	Ritchie	1979	5	205 6/8
<u>Typical – Bow</u>				
Mark Lester	Logan	1998	1	175 6/8
Ronnie McCoy	McDowell	1999	2	174 6/8
Austin Brown	Fayette	1998	3	173 5/8
Terry McGrady	Logan	1997	4	171 3/8
Billy Bishop	Mercer	1999	5*	170 7/8
Curtis Blankenship	Wyoming	2003	5*	170 7/8
<u>Non-Typical Bow</u>				
Jerry Hill	Wyoming	1986	1	212 1/8
Paul Sattler	Clay	1989	2	197 5/8
Dennis Hall	Mingo	2003	3	192 6/8
Charles O’Conner	Boone	1964	4*	191 2/8
Christopher Clark	Wyoming	2003	4*	191 2/8
Lonnie Wolfe	McDowell	1990	5	189 1/8

*Scores Tied

BLACK BEAR

by
Christopher W. Ryan

Season Results and Highlights

West Virginia hunters harvested 1,634 black bears during the combined archery and firearms seasons (Tables 1 and 2). This represents the second highest total on record and a 32% increase over 2004 (Figure 1). Hunters harvested bears in every county in District 2, 3, and 4. West Virginia's total black bear harvest was very close to what biologists predicted before the season. A good hard mast crop made bears available for gun hunters in December. In addition, archery hunters had a better than average year. On an interesting note, over 20,000 bears have died (hunting and non hunting combined) in West Virginia since records were kept in the 1960's.

Gun hunters harvested an all time record (1,047) number of bears in 2005. Firearms hunters harvested 202 bears, nearly identical to the 2004 harvest, during the special seasons held in Boone, Fayette, Kanawha, and Raleigh counties. One hundred thirty (68M: 62F) and 72 (44M: 28F) bears were harvested during the early November season with dogs and during the late November season without dogs, respectively (Table 1).

December firearms hunters harvested 845 (572M: 273F) bears, a 28% increase over 2004 (Table 1). Good hard mast conditions, better-than-average weather, and an abundant bear population led to the large increase in gun harvest. Acorns are the most important fall food for black bears throughout the Appalachians and may greatly affect the denning ecology of West Virginia's black bears. Black, red, and scarlet oak production was much higher in 2005. In addition, beech and black cherry mast indices were considerably higher in 2005 than 2004. West Virginia biologists have shown the importance of these food sources to the December gun harvests, especially in our mountain counties where these species are more dominant at higher elevations than oaks. Due to the prolonged activity of bears because of improved mast conditions, more bears were available for harvest in December. The top five traditional December counties were Pendleton (119), Pocahontas (116), Greenbrier (105), Randolph (94), and Tucker (57).

Bowhunters harvested 587 bears (364M: 223F), 56% higher than 2004 and the third highest on record. Archery hunters were able to take advantage of the growing bear population. Archery harvests have especially increased in the non-traditional counties such as Wyoming, Logan, and McDowell. The top five archery counties were Randolph (87), Webster (66), Greenbrier (48), Nicholas (47), and Preston (37).

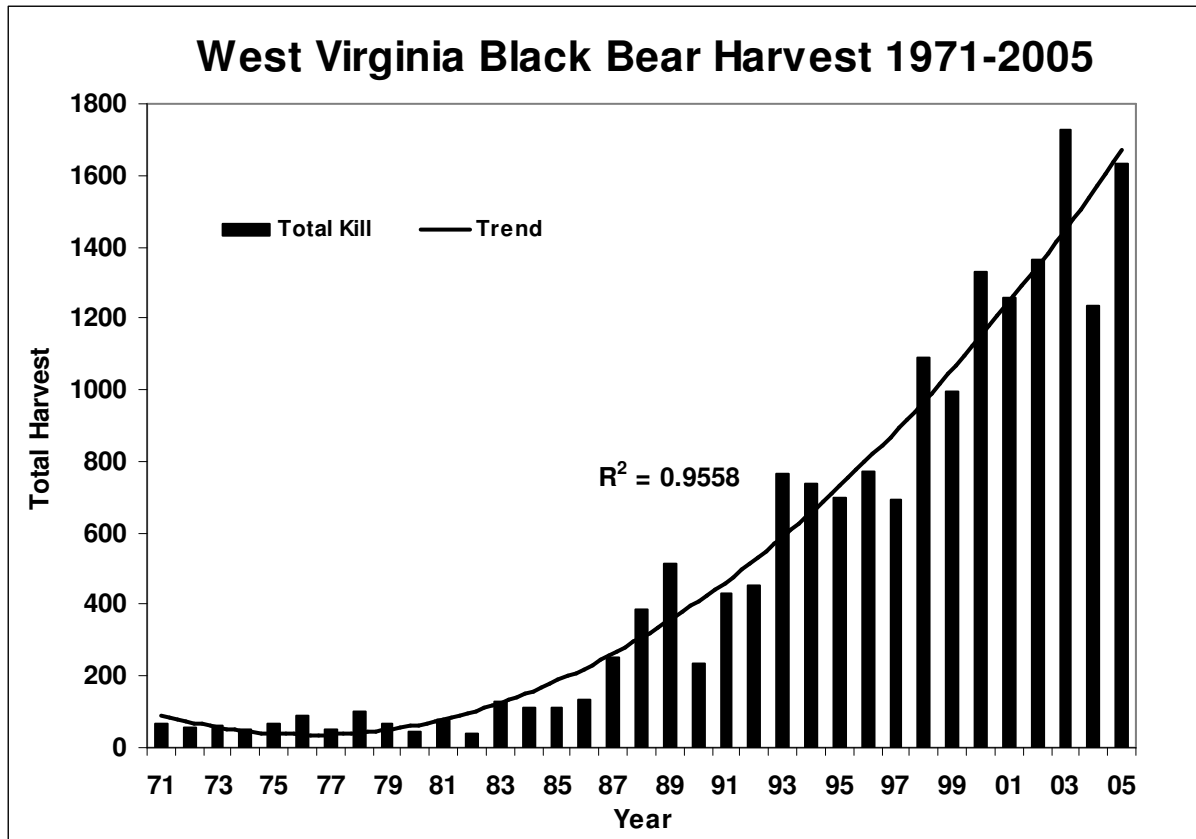


Fig. 1. West Virginia Black Bear Harvest, 1971 - 2005.

Nonseasonal Mortalities

There were 105 bears killed on highways, died as a result of illegal or marauder activities, or succumbed from other nonhunting causes (electrocution, accidental poisoning, etc.). This is up slightly from the record 95 nonseasonal mortalities recorded in 2004 (Table 4). There were 62 deaths from vehicular collisions compared to 55 roadkills in 2004. The number of illegal kills was up from 7 in 2004 to 15 in 2005; however, the number of bears killed from nuisance behavior was down again from 22 in 2004 to 18 in 2005.

Damage Payments

All hunters who pursue bear are required to buy bear damage stamps (Class DS). Funds derived from stamp sales are deposited in a special bear damage account to reimburse property owners for real and personal property damage caused by bears.

The number of bear damage claims increased 44% from 140 in 2004 to 201 in 2005 (Table 5). Total payments of \$109,147 were 57% higher than the \$69,694 paid out in 2004. Claims were reported in 27 counties in 2004 and 28 counties in 2005.

There were 58 claims for bees (compared to 47 in 2004), 49 for livestock (55 in 2004), 41 for corn (18 in 2004), and 53 (20 in 2004) miscellaneous claims (tents, coolers, automobiles, storm doors, windows, dogs, all terrain vehicle seats, storage buildings, etc.).

Randolph County had the greatest dollar amount in compensations with \$28,682, which was mostly (\$15,386) in livestock damage. Greenbrier County with \$20,074 was second in reimbursements for bee, livestock, corn, and miscellaneous damage. The five counties with the most claims were Randolph (52), Greenbrier (20), Pendleton (16), Pocahontas (11), and Preston (11).

Teeth Collections

Teeth from the 2004 samples have been received and hunters have been notified of their bear's age. Six hundred and ninety-one of the 708 hunter harvested teeth were useable for age identification. The remaining 17 teeth were not able to be aged because of a broken tooth, wrong tooth submitted by hunter, etc. One percent (7 M: 2F) were cubs (cubs are legal if they weigh 100 pounds), 33% (176M: 44F: 5U) were yearlings, 27% (128M: 57F: 1U) were 2-year olds, 16% (77M: 30F: 2U) were 3-year olds, and the remaining 23% were 4-years old or older. The oldest reported bear was an 18-year old male in Preston County on 12/10/04.

Reproductive Tract Collections

Readers should note that productivity data presented are from bears harvested in 2004. Information from reproductive tracts obtained in 2005 cannot be fully analyzed until ages of sows are determined, which is later in the year. Readers should also be reminded that they must add one year to the age of the bear for reproductive information. For example, if it is reported in this section that a 2-year old had corpora lutea then that means that she would have had her cubs at 3-years old.

Thirty-four reproductive tracts were collected in 2004. Two (6%) were of limited use because either the age or part of the tract was missing. Reproduction in black bears is directly related to the female's age, and therefore must be considered by age classes.

One of 2 yearlings showed evidence of breeding. This is extremely rare but has been documented in the wild. The yearling that showed evidence of breeding was from Fayette County. We have marked additional yearling bears with radio implants to examine known age of primiparity in southern West Virginia. These data will be extremely important in monitoring the population. It will be interesting to compare the implanted females with long-term reproductive tract data. Five of 10 (50%) 2-year old females bred in 2003. Of the 5 breeders, 3 sows had 2 corpora lutea and 2 contained 4 corpora lutea. It would have been highly unlikely for a 3-year old mother to raise all 4 cubs.

Seven of 9 (78%) of 3 or 4-year old sows showed evidence that they had bred in 2004. The other two sows, a 3-year old and a 4-year old, each had 2 placental scars, indicating that they had given birth in 2004. There was an average of 2.71 corpora lutea in these pregnant sows.

Nine of 11 (81%) of females 5-years and older contained corpora lutea and two had placental scars. There was an average of 2.88 corpora lutea per pregnant female. It was interesting to note that a 15-year old female had 6 corpora lutea present. While we have recorded litters of 5 in West Virginia we have never documented a litter of 6 cubs with one of our radio-collared females.

Black Bear Monitoring and Research Study

The southern bear study was initiated in 1999 to gather demographic information from bears in Boone, Fayette, Kanawha, and Raleigh counties and to learn more about bears captured as a result of nuisance behavior. Bear seasons have been modified within southern West Virginia based primarily on data collected through this monitoring and research project. In addition to the trapping effort in southern West Virginia, the Division of Natural Resources reallocated part of its resources to include monitoring the traditional mountain counties. The northern study area is centered in Randolph and Tucker counties and includes parts of Barbour, Grant, and Webster. Wildlife managers did an incredible job trapping bears in both study areas in 2005.

Wildlife managers have handled 498 adult bears 920 times on the southern study area since 1999. Bears handled during nuisance complaints were given orange ear tags so that they could be easily identified; whereas, bears caught specifically on research trap lines for the purpose of marking additional bears were tagged with black ear tags. DNR personnel observed 204 (85M: 95F: 24U) cubs during winter den checks to total 702 bears handled during the study period. Mean total litter size was 2.83 cubs (range 1-5, n = 72). There were 5 litters of 1 cub, 18 litters of 2 cubs, 35 litters of 3 cubs, 12 litters of 4 cubs, and 2 litters of 5 cubs. Eighty-one of 84 (96%) available females produced cubs. Sample sizes differed because managers heard cubs at some dens but did not get a reliable cub count.

Wildlife managers in districts 4 and 5 marked a record number of females prior to the 2005 hunting season. One hundred thirty-nine (67M: 72 F) bears were tagged in 2005 or were still wearing their radio transmitters from previous years. One hundred eight (41M: 67F) of the 139 bears were in the 4-county study area and considered available for harvest. Most of the additional bears outside of the study area were trapped and relocated as part of normal DNR activities. Age data was not available at press time; however, it is estimated that there were 9 yearlings and 58 2+ year-olds in the female sample. Thirty-eight females and 2 males were equipped with working radio transmitters at the start of the 2005 hunting season.

Ten of 67 (15%) females and 7 of 41 males (17%) available for direct harvest in the southern study area were reported dead during the 2004 hunting season. Three (1M: 2F) bears were harvested during the bow season, 7 (3M: 4F) during the early November season, 1 (1M: 0F) during the buck gun season, 3 (1M: 2F) December season, 1 male was killed illegally, and 2 females wearing radio collars died of unknown causes.

There were 29 known deaths of tagged bears during the 2005 hunting season in the southern study area. These known deaths were a combination of bears tagged during the entire study period that have not been previously reported. Eleven (7M: 4F) bears were harvested during the early November dog season, 8 (5M: 3F) during the bow season, 1 male during the buck gun season, 5 (2M: 3F) during the December season, 1 male was killed illegally, 1 male died from a vehicle collision, and 2 females died of unknown causes.

Wildlife managers in districts 1 and 3 marked 89 (49M: 40F) bears during 2005 to gather demographic data on the bear population in our traditional counties. Seventy-four bears (37M: 37F) were available for harvest inside the study area. Thirty-two female bears were equipped with radio transmitters at the start of hunting season. Five (14%) females and 11 (30%) males available for direct harvest died after October 1. Three (0M: 3F) bears were harvested by archery hunters, 12 (11M: 1F) were harvested in December, and 1 female died of unknown causes.

Wildlife managers worked 15 dens with newborn cubs in the northern study area in 2005. Thirty-five (19M: 9F: 7 U) cubs ($\bar{x} = 2.3$) were present in the dens. In addition, researchers worked 6 bears with 0 cubs (either too old or too young) and 2 yearling dens.

In addition to the black bear population monitoring and research project, managers conducted an experiment to determine the retention time of telazol in black bears. This project involved cooperation with West Virginia University, the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Virginia Tech, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. All samples have been taken and are currently at the lab waiting analysis. We hope these results will present managers with more options in the future.

The West Virginia Black Bear Monitoring and Research Project graciously accepted four donations from private groups during this fiscal year. The West Virginia Bear Hunters Association, the West Virginia Trophy Hunters Association, and two anonymous donations by the same person have all donated money to help us buy additional radio transmitters. Their support of our natural resources and projects help to demonstrate the cooperation between the WVDNR and multiple groups. We thank them for their continued support.

Table 1. West Virginia 2005 black bear harvest by season and county.

County	Bow	Early Nov.	Late Nov.	Dec.	Total
Barbour	17	0	0	4	21
Brooke	0	0	0	0	0
Hancock	0	0	0	0	0
Harrison	0	0	0	0	0
Marion	0	0	0	0	0
Marshall	0	0	0	0	0
Monongalia	4	0	0	0	4
Ohio	0	0	0	0	0
Preston	37	0	0	38	75
Taylor	1	0	0	0	1
Tucker	27	0	0	57	84
Wetzel	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. I Subtotal	86	0	0	99	185
Berkeley	1	0	0	2	3
Grant	8	0	0	50	58
Hampshire	5	0	0	1	6
Hardy	15	0	0	54	69
Jefferson	1	0	0	0	1
Mineral	4	0	0	19	23
Morgan	2	0	0	0	2
Pendleton	7	0	0	119	126
Dist. II Subtotal	43	0	0	245	288
Braxton	14	0	0	2	16
Clay	6	0	0	5	11
Lewis	0	0	0	1	1
Nicholas	47	0	0	41	88
Pocahontas	22	0	0	116	138
Randolph	87	0	0	94	181
Upshur	6	0	0	4	10
Webster	66	0	0	49	115
Dist. III Subtotal	248	0	0	312	560
Fayette	27	23	25	18	93
Greenbrier	48	0	0	105	153
McDowell	22	0	0	1	23
Mercer	6	0	0	1	7
Monroe	5	0	0	10	15
Raleigh	14	24	8	7	53
Summers	3	0	0	0	3
Wyoming	20	0	0	6	26
Dist. IV Subtotal	145	47	33	148	373
Boone	18	39	14	17	88
Cabell	0	0	0	0	0
Kanawha	25	44	25	17	111
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	19	0	0	6	25
Mason	0	0	0	0	0
Mingo	2	0	0	1	3
Putnam	0	0	0	0	0
Wayne	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. V Subtotal	64	83	39	41	227
Calhoun	1	0	0	0	1
Doddridge	0	0	0	0	0
Gilmer	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson	0	0	0	0	0
Pleasants	0	0	0	0	0
Ritchie	0	0	0	0	0
Roane	0	0	0	0	0
Tyler	0	0	0	0	0
Wirt	0	0	0	0	0
Wood	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. VI Subtotal	1	0	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	587	130	72	845	1,634

Table 2. Sex ratios of West Virginia black bears for November gun season, bow season, and December gun season, 1964-2005.

Year	Bow season and/or Early Nov. gun season		Late Nov. or December gun season		Annual Kill		Total*
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1964-1978							
15-Yr Total	318	345	178	71	496	416	912
Sex Ratios	48%	52%	71%	29%	54%	46%	
1979	0	0	50	18	50	18	68
1980	2	2	34	9	36	11	47
1981	3	2	59	16	62	18	80
1982	11	5	16	4	27	9	36
1983	11	6	78	34	89	40	129
1984	8	8	51	43	59	51	110
1985	14	7	68	24	82	31	113
1986	31	14	61	26	92	40	132
1987	40	14	146	51	186	65	251
1988	21	16	198	165	219	181	400
1989	81	96	198	135	279	231	510
1990	41	20	114	60	155	80	235
1991	72	57	186	111	258	168	426
1992	112	89	169	85	281	174	455
1993	141	96	340	190	481	286	767
1994	111	73	290	258	401	331	732
1995	152	75	310	153	462	228	690
1996	114	101	355	198	469	299	768
1997	225	198	178	85	403	283	686
1998	167	97	481	337	648	434	1,082
1999	256	168	369	201	625	369	994
2000	196	102	655	364	851	466	1,317
2001	302	165	482	301	784	466	1,250
2002	540	321	327	169	867	490	1,357
2003	605	422	450	222	1055	644	1,699
2004	319	219	479	218	798	437	1,235
2005	432	285	616	301	1048	586	1,634
27-Year Total	4,007	2,658	6,760	3,778	10,767	6,436	17,203
Average Sex Ratios	60%	40%	64%	36%	63%	37%	
2005 Sex Ratios	60%	40%	67%	33%	64%	36%	

*Represents bears of known sex and not the total harvest in each year.

Table 3. Number of black bears killed each year in West Virginia and cause of death.

Year	Hunting Season		Illegal Kill	Road Kill	Marauders	Others	Total
	Bow	Gun					
70's Subtotal	14	523	70's Average Annual Bag: Bow 2; Gun 65				
1980	4	43	9	5	11	3	75
1981	5	75	15	2	5	0	102
1982	17	20	17	8	17	5	84
1983	17	112	15	6	7	7	164
1984	16	94	14	7	9	7	147
1985	22	92	12	9	11	13	159
1986	44	88	8	18	18	3	179
1987	55	197	12	10	15	13	302
1988	38	350	20	25	23	24	480
1989	43	471	14	14	15	15	572
80's Subtotal	261	1,542	80's Average Annual Bag: Bow 26; Gun 154				
1990	61	174	14	23	13	10	295
1991	131	297	18	21	13	2	482
1992	201	254	17	48	18	8	546
1993	239	529	24	40	4	6	842
1994	185	550	10	31	5	5	786
1995	227	470	14	37	6	8	762
1996	214	558	6	23	15	7	823
1997	420	272	13	58	30	10	803
1998	265	825	12	30	8	6	1,146
1999	420	577	9	24	8	15	1,053
90's Subtotal	2,363	4,506	90's Average Annual Bag: Bow 236; Gun 450				
2000	305	1,023	6	16	8	4	1,362
2001	475	785	18	43	22	1	1,344
2002	726	640	14	82	28	10	1,500
2003	776	954	17	87	61	7	1,902
2004	374	861	7	55	22	11	1,330
2005	587	1,047	15	62	18	10	1,739
00's Subtotal	3,243	5,310	00's Average Annual Bag: Bow 540; Gun 885				

*November Gun Seasons held in 1989, 2002, 2003, and 2004 in certain counties

Table 4. West Virginia 2005 nonseasonal black bear mortalities by county and type.

County	Roadkills	Illegal	Marauders	Misc.	Total
Barbour	0	0	0	0	0
Brooke	0	0	0	0	0
Hancock	0	0	0	0	0
Harrison	1	0	0	0	1
Marion	0	0	0	0	0
Marshall	0	0	0	0	0
Monongalia	0	1	0	0	1
Ohio	0	0	0	0	0
Preston	5	0	0	0	5
Taylor	0	1	0	0	1
Tucker	0	0	0	0	0
Wetzel	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. I Subtotal	6	2	0	0	8
Berkeley	0	0	0	0	0
Grant	1	1	0	0	2
Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0
Hardy	4	0	1	0	5
Jefferson	0	0	0	0	0
Mineral	0	0	0	0	0
Morgan	0	0	0	0	0
Pendleton	4	2	1	1	8
Dist. II Subtotal	9	3	2	1	15
Braxton	10	0	0	0	10
Clay	2	0	0	0	2
Lewis	0	0	0	0	0
Nicholas	10	0	2	0	12
Pocahontas	0	1	0	1	2
Randolph	3	2	2	3	10
Upshur	1	0	0	0	1
Webster	1	0	0	0	1
Dist. III Subtotal	27	3	4	4	38
Fayette	4	0	0	0	4
Greenbrier	8	4	2	0	14
McDowell	0	1	1	1	3
Mercer	0	0	0	0	0
Monroe	0	0	0	0	0
Raleigh	3	0	5	0	8
Summers	0	0	0	0	0
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. IV Subtotal	15	5	8	1	29
Boone	3	0	3	1	7
Cabell	0	0	0	0	0
Kanawha	2	0	1	3	6
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	0	0	0	0	0
Mason	0	0	0	0	0
Mingo	0	2	0	0	2
Putnam	0	0	0	0	0
Wayne	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. V Subtotal	5	2	4	4	15
Calhoun	0	0	0	0	0
Doddridge	0	0	0	0	0
Gilmer	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson	0	0	0	0	0
Pleasants	0	0	0	0	0
Ritchie	0	0	0	0	0
Roane	0	0	0	0	0
Tyler	0	0	0	0	0
Wirt	0	0	0	0	0
Wood	0	0	0	0	0
Dist. VI Subtotal	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	62	15	18	10	105

Table 5. Black bear damage claims paid and payments by county, 2001-2005.

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Barbour	0	\$1,050(3)	\$1,858(4)	\$2,129(4)	\$1,439(2)
Berkeley	0	0	0	0	0
Boone	\$1,687(6)	\$2,141(10)	\$6,148(4)	\$434(3)	\$2,264(9)
Braxton	\$2,313(4)	\$1,573(8)	\$443(3)	0	\$3,080(3)
Cabell	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	0	0	0	0	0
Clay	\$1,451(4)	\$81(1)	\$1,859(1)	0	\$1,472(3)
Doddridge	\$1,015(1)	\$275(2)	0	0	0
Fayette	\$2,203(4)	\$4,634(7)	\$5,677(8)	\$1,973(4)	\$2,543(6)
Gilmer	0	0	0	0	0
Grant	0	0	\$2,988(5)	0	\$1,429(6)
Greenbrier	\$8,946(19)	\$30,658(27)	\$30,766(19)	\$12,300(22)	\$20,075(20)
Hampshire	0	0	\$2,024(2)	\$127(1)	0
Hardy	\$224(4)	\$4,627(16)	\$5,446(8)	\$2,500(5)	\$1,357(5)
Harrison	0	0	0	\$258 (1)	0
Jackson	\$580(1)	0	0	0	0
Jefferson	0	0	0	0	0
Kanawha	\$3,468(9)	\$3,558(8)	\$1,375(7)	\$4,090(1)	\$7,207(6)
Lewis	\$130(1)	0	0	\$49(1)	0
Lincoln	\$90(1)	\$216(1)	0	\$1,800(1)	\$137(1)
Logan	\$2,339(9)	\$257(1)	0	0	\$776(3)
Marshall	\$1,761(1)	0	0	0	0
Mason	0	\$1,454(2)	0	0	0
McDowell	\$80(2)	\$933(3)	0	0	0
Mercer	0	\$1,100(3)	0	\$1,040(1)	\$2,504(7)
Mineral	\$200(1)	\$360(1)	\$134(2)	\$79(1)	\$101(1)
Mingo	\$1,683(3)	\$1,412(3)	0	\$505(1)	\$992(3)
Monongalia	0	0	\$632(1)	0	\$254(1)
Monroe	0	\$1,156(3)	\$146(2)	\$338(1)	\$2,224(2)
Morgan	\$445(1)	0	\$613(2)	\$830(1)	0
Nicholas	\$3,632(13)	\$8,188(17)	\$5,243(10)	\$7,017(7)	\$4,939(10)
Pendleton	\$1,385(5)	\$6,109(17)	\$8,245(21)	\$4,307(15)	\$5,314(16)
Pocahontas	\$9,789(16)	\$13,955(22)	\$12,007(18)	\$7,667(15)	\$7,102(11)
Preston	\$2,212(4)	\$3,738(5)	\$1,015(5)	\$3,170(3)	\$2,950(11)
Putnam	0	0	0	0	0
Raleigh	\$2,711(6)	\$3,454(8)	\$6,128(8)	552(2)	\$4,040(9)
Randolph	\$2,081(6)	\$3,735(14)	\$8,679(27)	\$12,282(34)	\$28,682(52)
Roane	0	0	\$1,917(2)	0	0
Summers	\$1,120(2)	\$549(3)	\$2,326(2)	\$1,421(2)	0
Taylor	\$120(1)	0	0	0	\$1,318 (1)
Tucker	\$864(2)	\$887(5)	\$3,153(5)	\$940(2)	\$2,434(3)
Upshur	\$162(3)	0	\$197(2)	\$730(6)	\$110(1)
Wayne	\$85(1)	\$1,392(2)	\$372(1)	0	\$2,168(1)
Webster	\$900(5)	\$5,059(17)	\$1,147(6)	\$355(1)	\$1,359(5)
Wetzel	0	0	0	0	\$877(3)
Wirt	0	0	\$845(1)	\$199(1)	0
Wyoming	\$658(2)	\$85(1)	\$1,460(5)	\$2,602(4)	0
Total	\$54,334 (138)	\$102,636(210)	\$112,843 (181)	\$69,694 (140)	\$109,147(201)

WILD TURKEY

by
James E. Evans
&
William K. Igo

Spring Harvest

The 2005 spring gobbler harvest was 10,957 (Table 1). The total was 3.5% higher than the kill of the previous year (10,573). Based on similar brood productivity in 2003 and 2004, biologists had predicted a 2005 spring harvest comparable to the take in 2004. Part of the slight increase can be attributed to the additional harvest of 302 birds during the newly implemented youth season. This youth hunt occurred the Saturday before the regular Monday opening date.

The top five counties in terms of harvest were Mason (451), Mercer (389), Summers (387), Preston (375), and Ritchie (341). District 6, in westcentral West Virginia, had the highest harvest (2,339), followed closely by District 1 (2,303). Interestingly, there were slight decreases in kill in the northerly and easterly portions of the State (District 1,2,3) and slight increases in the southerly and westerly areas of the State (Districts 4,5,6). Table 2 depicts the harvest by public wildlife management areas (WMA's). The top five areas were Blackwater (40), Bluestone (38), Wardensville (29), Potomac (27), and Hillcrest (26).

The opening day of spring season accounted for 18% of the total spring kill, similar to the 17% opening day harvest in 2004. This is surprising considering the substantial snowfall in many areas of the State on the opening morning. The second day harvest made up 12% of the total kill, and then declined each day through the end of the season, with spikes of higher kills each Saturday. During 2005, the first week accounted for 55% of the total kill, compared to 61% in 2004 (Table 3). The percent harvest during the remaining weeks was similar to 2004.

Fall Harvest

During the fall of 2005, a total of 21 counties were opened to fall wild turkey hunting. The harvest (1,130) was 17% lower than the 2004 total of 1,357 (Table 4) and, unfortunately, resulted in a decline in harvest for the fourth year in a row.

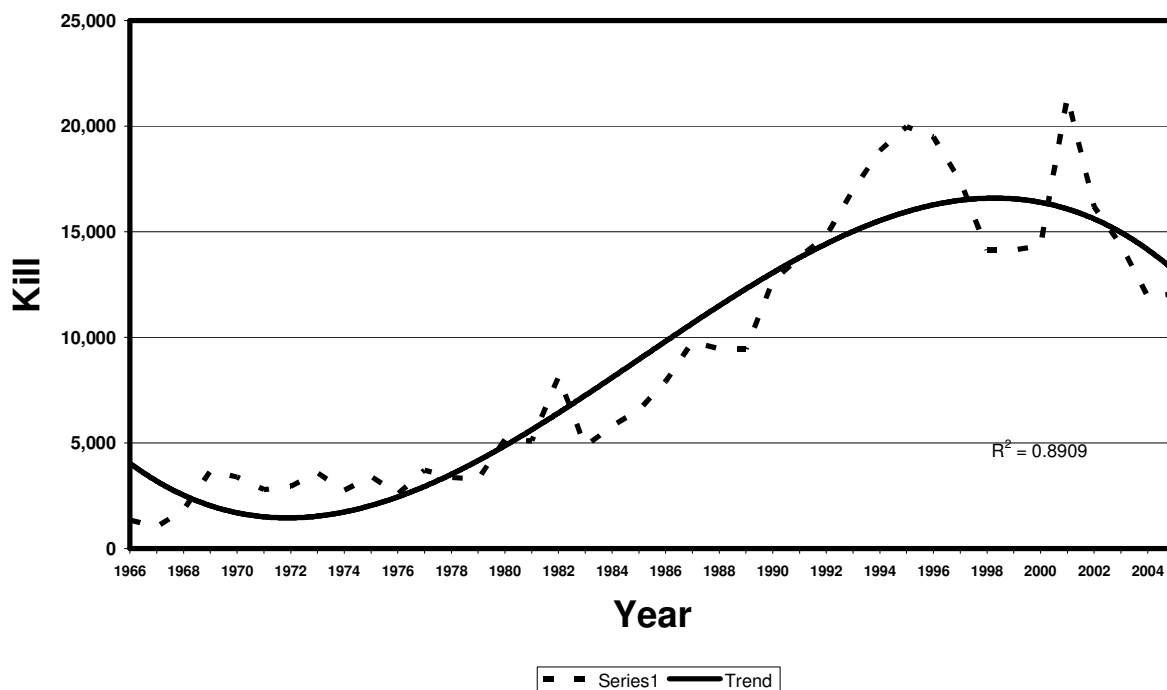
All districts had significantly lower harvests than in 2004, with the exception of District 3 where the kill was almost the same. The traditional fall-hunted counties that are open four weeks (except Preston, two weeks) accounted for 82% of the fall kill with 928 birds checked in. The top five counties during the fall 2005 season were Greenbrier (108), Preston (107), Monroe (86), Nicholas (82), and Pocahontas (75). The harvest by WMA's is shown in Table 5. Public (WMA)

harvests made up 18% of the total kill—versus 12% of the total 2004 harvest. Top WMA's were Bluestone (27), Rimel (15), Cranberry (14), Potomac (14), and Little River (13).

Hunters checked in 220 turkeys (19%) the opening Saturday of the fall season. Another 11% of the total fall harvest was killed the following Saturday. The opening week accounted for 45% of the total harvest, compared to 38% reported in 2004 (Table 6). The last week of the season made up only 11% of the kill.

The combined spring and fall harvest in 2005 was 12,087, and ranks fifteenth in terms of total wild turkey harvest (Table 7). The 2005 tally was just 1% higher than last year. The total spring harvest of gobblers since 1966 (255,464) is more than twice the number of wild turkeys killed in the fall (109,011).

Total Wild Turkey Harvest (Spring+Fall), 1966-2005

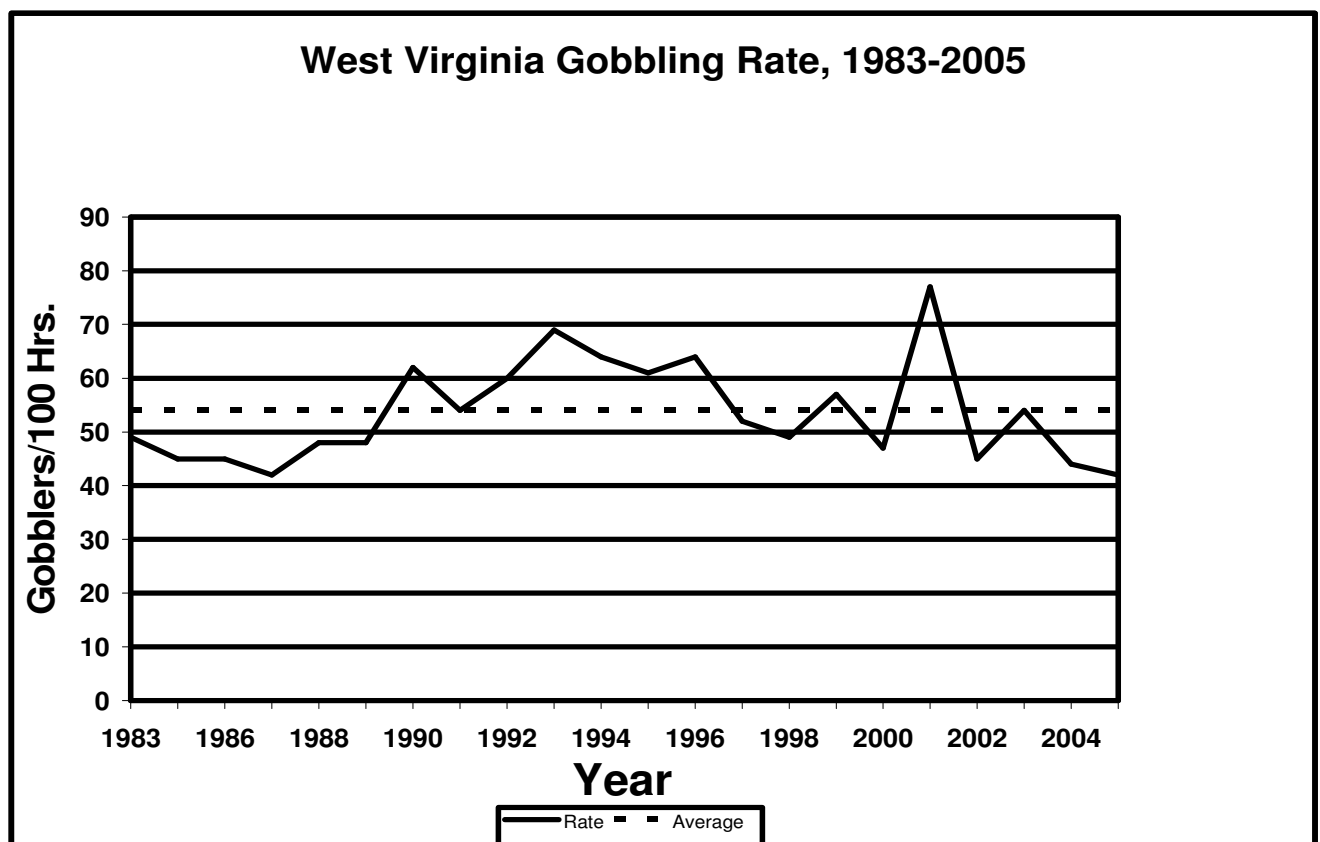


Surveys

Spring Gobbler Survey

The Wildlife Resources Section and the West Virginia Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) conduct an annual survey of spring gobbler hunters. This survey is conducted entirely by volunteer sportsmen that donate their time and effort to gather information to help the DNR manage wild turkeys in the State. The West Virginia Chapter sends survey forms to its members, and the Wildlife Resources Section of the DNR compiles the data from these and other participants. A report is written and distributed free of charge to cooperators.

During 2005, results were compiled from 268 hunters. Cooperators took 2,414 hunting trips and heard 4,049 gobblers. The gobbling rate (42 gobblers heard per 100 hours) was 5% lower than 2004 (44), and well below our 21-year average (54).



As noted last year, the survey showed that the best gobbling in 2005 occurred in the Western and Southwestern counties. The survey also provides DNR biologists important data not only on wild turkeys but also ruffed grouse, coyote, overwinter losses of wild turkeys and white-

tailed deer, and much other information. Cooperators are also submitting population data on other wildlife species, and it is projected that the survey may provide accurate population trend information on white-tailed deer. The survey is an important forum for hunters to express their opinions and ideas.

Any hunter desiring to receive a copy of the annual report is required to participate in the survey. Spring gobbler hunters wanting to help are encouraged to contact Patty Fordyce, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, PO Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241, phone 304-637-0245, fax 304-637-0250 or email pattyfordyce@wvdnr.gov. Those wishing to participate will be sent the necessary forms and a questionnaire prior to the spring hunting season. As mentioned in the past, the survey is easy to conduct. A hunter does not have to harvest a gobbler to provide useful data. Most of the information collected deals with what a hunter hears, sees, or has an opinion on.

Bowhunter Survey

Results from the Bowhunter Survey normally lag one year behind other surveys. This survey not only monitors white-tailed deer numbers, but is also a valuable tool in determining population and harvest trends of a variety of other species including wild turkey. The survey shows that the Mountain State's turkey population declined during the 1990's, recovered in 1999 and 2001 due to good brood production, and then declined again in 2002 and 2003. It will take several good brood years in order for wild turkey numbers to reach levels observed in 1999 and 2001.

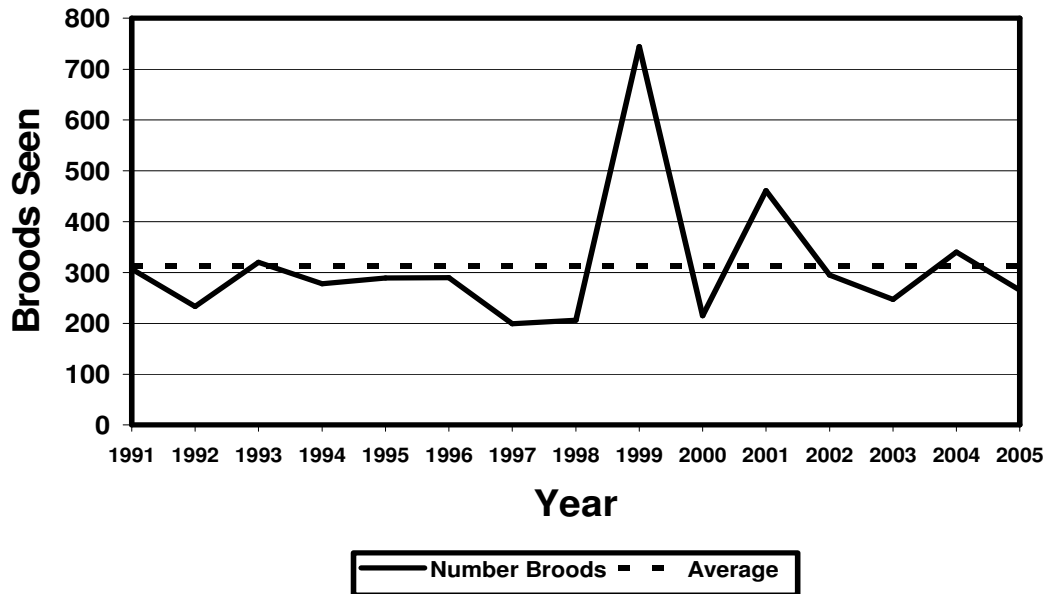
Sighting by bowhunter cooperators during the fall of 2004 increased 6% from 2003. However, the rate of 38 turkeys seen per 100 hours of bowhunting was 31% lower than our record rate (59) and was 10% lower than the average (42).

Brood Survey

The Wild Turkey Brood Survey is used to help determine wild turkey population levels prior to fall and spring hunting seasons. It has proven to be a pretty accurate predictor of the spring gobbler harvest two years in advance of the season. A good brood year in 2004 means an abundance of two-year-old birds for 2006—these talkative and vulnerable toms mean we should see higher gobbling rates and a higher spring harvest in 2006.

The 2005 brood count was 265, which was 22% lower than the 2004 total of 340. The count was also 18% lower than our five-year (2001-2005) average (322). We, therefore, would predict a lower spring gobbler harvest with diminished gobbling rates for 2007.

Wild Turkey Broods Seen, 1991-2005

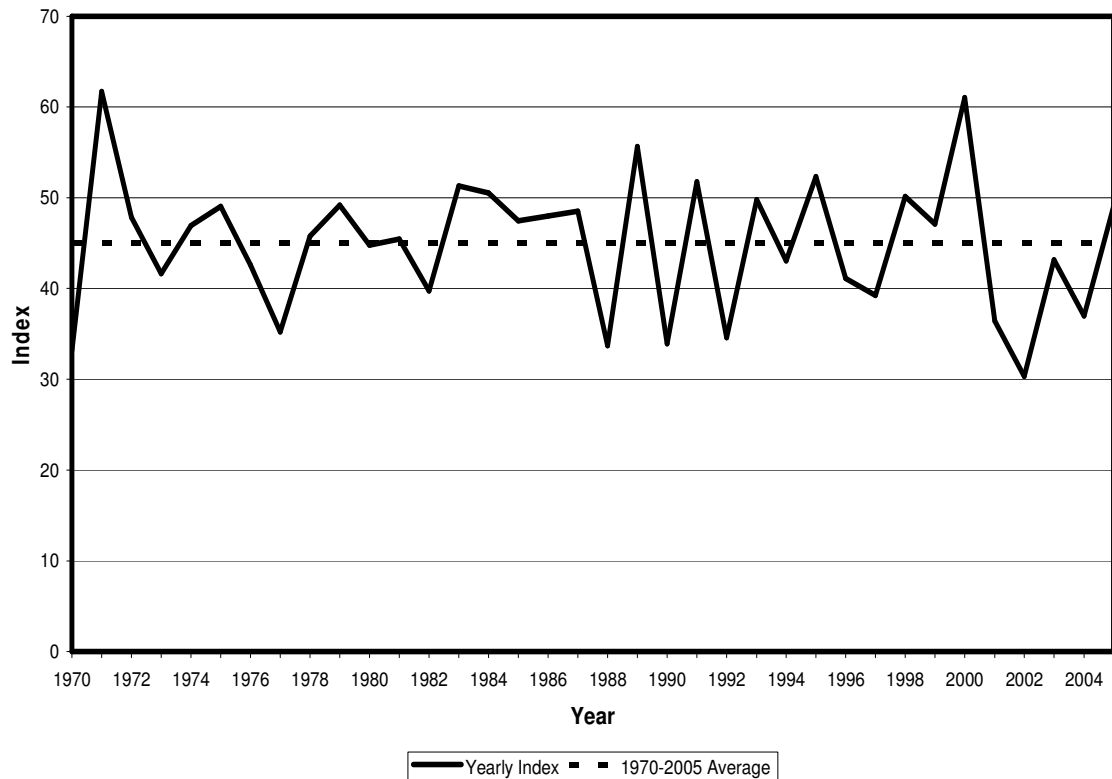


Summer brood counts have correctly forecast fall harvest trends 68% of the time since 1968. Complicating fall kill predictions are the number of counties eligible for fall seasons (based on spring harvests) and regional differences in brood productivity, particularly brood success in fall hunt counties.

Mast Survey

The Wildlife and Law Enforcement Sections of the DNR and the Division of Forestry have conducted surveys of mast abundance of 18 tree and shrub species that are important wildlife foods continuously since 1970. The average of all mast species in 2005 was higher than 2004, and for the first time in the last five years the mast index was slightly above average. Scrub, red, black, and scarlet oak acorns showed higher production than 2004, and beech, walnut, and hickory nut crops were also well above last year. In 2004, white oak mast was good, and in 2005 the red oak group improved significantly. This makes two years in a row with near normal acorn production. Good acorn crops are important because they are the most valuable mast species in West Virginia. Hunters probably learned that, with good acorn crops available and populations down from poor hatches, turkeys were more difficult to locate during the fall season.

Mast Indices, 1970-2005



Gobbler Survival Study

Fieldwork for the research on survival of gobblers was started in 2004. The study is being conducted in cooperation with the state of Virginia. This research should allow biologists to learn causes of mortality, and comparisons can be made between West Virginia's spring season and Virginia's, which has a much earlier opening with limited all-day hunting. This study could not have been launched without the generous backing of the West Virginia Chapter of The National Wild Turkey Federation. Their support included the original purchase of 75 radio transmitters, in addition to telemetry tracking equipment (totaling about \$30,000!). Without this funding from the State Chapter, this study would not be a reality.

First-year trapping operations for the gobbler survival study was initiated in August 2004 and ended the first week of April 2005. A total of 102 gobblers were captured and fitted with radio transmitters. An additional 25 toms (6 adults, 19 juveniles) were caught and banded only, due to an insufficient number of radios at time of capture. A full complement of 75 radios was out when winter trapping was completed on April 4, 2005 (38 juveniles, 37 adults). One adult was killed by an unknown predator after trapping was finished and before the first day of gobbler season (April 25).

Of the 74 remaining birds, 11 were harvested (15% harvest rate) and checked as legal kills. There were nine adults (25% harvest rate) and two juveniles (5% harvest rate) taken. Following is a breakdown by study area:

WV1: (Traditional fall hunt counties – Goal: 30 birds). The study area had 31 birds (15 adults, 16 juveniles) entering the spring season. Three adult toms (harvest rate 20%) and one jake (harvest rate 6%) were checked in. Another adult and one juvenile were killed by mammalian predators during the season.

WV2: (Non-Fall Counties – Goal: 45 birds). This area had 43 birds on the opening of gobbler season (21 adults, 22 juveniles). Six adults (29% harvest rate) and one jake (5%) were submitted for checking. One adult died from an apparent accidental collision with a car or tree limb, and a jake was killed illegally during gobbler season (trespass).

Of the 11 toms check in, seven were taken by shotgun and four with rifle. Using spur lengths as age criteria, those killed by shotgun include the two jakes and four (80%) were two-year old birds. Two of three gobblers killed with rifles were aged three or older (67%); one bird killed with a rifle was censored from aging because of abnormal spur development.

Five of the 11 checked in toms (45%) were killed on public land. Six (55%) were taken on private property. A total of 51 birds (68%) were trapped on private lands and were tracked there. Only 23 (32%) were trapped on public lands, and several of these were tracked on private lands just prior to being harvested. This suggests that harvest rates on public lands may be significantly higher than rates on private lands.

After censoring 23 birds for failing to reach the 14 day survival period after capture (four of these were illegal kills), a total of 29 mortalities have been documented. Eleven (38%) mortalities have been legally harvested toms (all in spring season) and four (14%) have been illegally killed. Therefore, 52% of total mortality thus far has involved legal/illegal hunting. Eight birds (28%) have been killed by predators, three (10%) mammalian predation, four (14%) avian predation and one (3%) unknown predation. Three birds (10%) have died from accidental collisions (one with a power line, one by car, one by tree limb). There was one gobbler (3%) that died of apparent disease. Two other toms (7%) died from unknown causes, or are under investigation. We have no evidence any birds have succumbed thus far from crippling loss.

Three juveniles were captured and radioed in September and October 2005, bringing total gobblers currently being tracked (February 2006) to 56. These include three juveniles, 31 toms two-years old, and 22 birds three years or older. Winter trapping has been started, with emphasis on capturing juvenile (jake) gobblers. This will permit analysis of mortality rates among different age groups.

2006 Hunting Regulations

The youth spring season hunt will open Saturday, April 22, prior to the regular Monday season opening on April 24. This will be the second year for the youth hunt—current regulations specify that **youngsters eight through 14 years of age will be able to participate in the youth hunt when accompanied by a licensed adult who must be at least 21 years old**. The adult cannot carry a gun, and must stay close enough to render advice. The bag limit is one and only shotguns using 4, 5 or 6 shot are legal. The regular spring gobbler season lasts four weeks, ending on May 20.

The 2006 fall hunting season will open October 21. The season will close October 28 in counties open to the one-week season (these counties determined by the 2006 spring harvests), November 4 in Preston County, and November 18 in the traditional fall hunt counties that are open to four weeks of hunting. Hunters should review the “Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary”, which should be available in July, 2006, for counties eligible for the one-week fall season and other details on spring and fall turkey seasons.

Table 1. Spring harvest of wild turkeys in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Barbour	336	254	221	188	200
Brooke	265	159	140	144	119
Hancock	141	120	128	182	131
Harrison	716	419	306	277	270
Marion	404	320	255	190	166
Marshall	547	418	363	278	264
Monongalia	570	394	351	292	235
Ohio	218	162	138	116	109
Preston	640	499	454	348	375
Taylor	215	161	156	116	102
Tucker	167	108	102	53	88
Wetzel	566	324	236	200	244
Dist. I Subtotal	4,785	3,338	2,850	2,384	2,303
Berkeley	93	79	69	74	83
Grant	172	162	156	138	108
Hampshire	215	181	224	200	192
Hardy	227	187	172	217	127
Jefferson	48	40	33	40	43
Mineral	134	134	124	86	108
Morgan	76	68	81	61	85
Pendleton	181	142	133	124	108
Dist. II Subtotal	1,146	993	992	940	854
Braxton	432	270	289	227	234
Clay	170	78	95	83	74
Lewis	605	442	375	279	268
Nicholas	305	222	199	181	175
Pocahontas	216	157	132	74	97
Randolph	380	192	204	165	132
Upshur	413	346	274	225	206
Webster	182	89	117	96	68
Dist. III Subtotal	2,703	1,796	1,685	1,330	1,254
Fayette	408	344	309	271	264
Greenbrier	405	350	289	239	276
McDowell	279	241	220	214	182
Mercer	322	337	277	294	389
Monroe	205	191	170	167	217
Raleigh	387	318	294	299	328
Summers	368	302	254	316	387
Wyoming	278	250	237	166	172
Dist. IV Subtotal	2,652	2,333	2,050	1,966	2,215
Boone	184	150	173	189	141
Cabell	165	168	171	141	152
Kanawha	422	278	260	260	297
Lincoln	228	229	220	208	227
Logan	167	156	163	159	155
Mason	592	559	473	400	451
Mingo	114	98	95	81	92
Putnam	364	297	243	211	233
Wayne	272	231	238	198	244
Dist. V. Subtotal	2,508	2,166	2,036	1,847	1,992
Calhoun	232	139	189	183	164
Doddridge	489	338	245	191	214
Gilmer	342	216	224	186	183
Jackson	545	351	468	250	333
Pleasants	190	132	113	89	90
Ritchie	542	343	437	291	341
Roane	382	298	326	294	297
Tyler	423	231	246	178	199
Wirt	353	276	317	215	234
Wood	583	435	357	229	284
Dist. VI Subtotal	4,081	2,759	2,922	2,106	2,339
State Total	17,875	13,385	12,535	10,573	10,957

Table 2. Spring turkey harvest by locality in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Monongahela National Forest					
Beaverdam	40	15	12	4	3
Blackwater	103	27	22	12	40
Cheat	60	19	23	11	6
Cranberry	60	29	37	26	15
Little River	94	48	28	17	12
Neola	64	51	47	21	24
Otter Creek	47	27	9	14	12
Potomac	137	67	57	39	27
Rimel	49	23	37	14	21
Tea Creek	46	10	12	5	3
Subtotal	700	316	284	163	163
George Washington National Forest					
Shenandoah	51	14	15	20	15
Wardensville	52	37	42	46	29
Subtotal	103	51	57	66	44
Jefferson National Forest					
Potts Creek	8	6	5	2	3
Subtotal	8	6	5	2	3
National River					
New River Gorge	9	19	6	10	18
Subtotal	9	19	6	10	18
State Owned or Leased					
Allegheny	4	3	0	2	5
Amherst/Plymouth	13	5	7	8	13
Anawalt	17	10	3	2	5
Bear Rocks	2	0	0	0	2
Beech Fork	30	16	22	19	17
Berwind	21	2	17	11	2
Beury Mountain	0	1	1	3	1
Big Ugly	0	0	0	1	1
Bluestone	44	38	31	44	38
Burnsville	31	24	19	14	11
Cabwaylingo State Forest	4	2	5	7	3
Calvin Price State Forest	7	4	1	1	4
Camp Creek State Forest	15	5	8	4	3
Castleman Run	1	1	3	2	5
Center Branch	1	1	2	0	2
Conaway Run	3	1	0	3	1
Coopers Rock State Forest	32	18	14	9	6
Cornstalk, Chief	21	14	10	13	17
East Lynn	7	7	7	9	14
Edwards Run	1	0	1	0	0
Elk River	28	9	15	14	15
Fork Creek	9	0	7	8	1
Frozen Camp	2	1	0	1	2
Greenbrier State Forest	7	5	1	3	2
Handley	1	0	0	1	0
Hilbert	0	1	0	0	1
Hillcrest	17	19	17	25	26
Horse Creek	5	1	2	3	0
Hughes River	25	14	23	8	13
Huttonsville	1	0	0	0	0
Jug	16	13	10	7	15
Kanawha State Forest	4	4	7	10	10
Kumbrabow State Forest	13	5	6	5	1

Table 2. Continued

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
State Owned or Leased					
Lantz Farm	0	1	0	0	0
Laurel Lake	4	12	10	5	8
Lewis Wetzel	38	9	9	9	8
McClintic	17	14	18	20	17
Meadow River	1	1	0	0	0
Moncove	1	0	0	0	0
Morris Creek	0	0	0	0	2
Nathaniel Mountain	8	4	2	3	3
Panther State Forest	22	5	13	10	7
Pleasants Creek	4	1	3	6	0
Plum Orchard	9	5	5	3	4
Pruntytown	6	4	3	1	2
R.D. Bailey	17	15	18	15	12
Ritchie Mines	10	5	10	7	5
Seneca State Forest	10	10	3	1	5
Shannondale	3	1	4	3	6
Short Mountain	8	4	6	9	5
Sleepy Creek	26	14	26	22	13
Snake Hill	4	2	2	8	1
Springfield	14	6	10	0	0
Stonecoal	8	3	8	6	4
Stonewall Jackson	67	35	34	24	20
Summersville	10	1	2	5	5
Sutton Res.	2	2	4	1	0
Tate Lohr	0	4	1	0	0
Underwood WMA	0	1	2	2	1
Upper Mud River	1	1	0	0	1
Wallback	2	2	1	3	4
Widmyer	0	0	0	0	2
Subtotal	674	386	433	400	371
Private Land	16,381	12,605	11,732	9,920	10,351
Unknown	0	2	18	12	7
State Total	17,875	13,385	12,535	10,573	10,957

Table 3. Spring wild turkey harvest by week of season, 2004-2005.

Week of Season	Harvest		Percent	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
Unknown	56	111	1	1
Youth Hunt	0	302	0	3
Week 1	6,480	5976	61	55
Week 2	2,137	2222	20	20
Week 3	1,193	1375	11	12
Week 4	707	971	7	9
Total	10,573	10,957	100	100

Table 4. Fall harvest of wild turkeys in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Barbour	58	C	C	C	C
Brooke	30	23	18	12	10
Hancock	8	33	9	12	7
Harrison	56	51	C	C	C
Marion	35	39	C	C	C
Marshall	27	28	16	35	C
Monongalia	37	43	30	C	C
Ohio	17	16	21	17	15
Preston	249	238	126	125	107
Taylor	26	35	C	C	C
Tucker	85	80	22	41	30
Wetzel	18	C	C	C	C
Dist. I Subtotal	646	586	242	242	169
Berkeley	32	27	30	42	13
Grant	131	136	65	73	59
Hampshire	138	139	116	135	74
Hardy	140	119	89	120	68
Mineral	74	65	38	62	34
Morgan	33	36	20	31	24
Pendleton	150	110	63	45	52
Dist. II Subtotal	698	632	421	508	324
Lewis	89	77	C	C	C
Nicholas	181	161	81	106	82
Pocahontas	201	161	100	49	75
Randolph	256	197	81	69	73
Upshur	100	98	C	C	C
Webster	96	85	31	55	43
Dist. III Subtotal	923	779	293	279	273
Greenbrier	304	308	245	165	108
Monroe	174	203	184	163	86
Summers	77	C	C	C	51
Dist. IV Subtotal	555	511	429	328	245
Mason	132	103	97	C	74
Putnam	72	C	C	C	C
Dist. V. Subtotal	204	103	97	0	74
Doddridge	45	29	C	C	C
Gilmer	37	C	C	C	C
Jackson	99	C	100	C	C
Pleasants	10	26	C	C	C
Ritchie	56	C	64	C	C
Tyler	38	C	38	C	C
Wirt	82	65	77	C	45
Wood	112	77	79	C	C
Dist. VI Subtotal	479	197	358	0	45
Unknown	0	0	1	0	0
State Total	3,505	2,808	1,841	1,357	1,130

Table 5. Fall turkey harvest by locality in West Virginia, 2001-2005.

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Monongahela National Forest					
Beaverdam	25	11	12	1	5
Blackwater	23	23	3	15	10
Cheat	17	11	8	2	6
Cranberry	26	12	14	10	14
Little River	60	36	15	9	13
Neola	51	48	35	26	12
Otter Creek	14	16	0	3	5
Potomac	64	22	10	7	14
Rimel	27	25	13	11	15
Tea Creek	14	5	5	4	8
Subtotal	321	209	115	88	102
George Washington National Forest					
Shenandoah	30	13	8	9	12
Wardensville	41	24	28	24	8
Subtotal	71	37	36	33	20
Jefferson National Forest					
Potts Creek	8	2	4	4	4
Subtotal	8	2	4	4	4
State Owned or Leased					
Allegheny	1	0	0	1	2
Amherst/Plymouth	2	C	C	C	C
Bear Rocks	1	0	1	0	7
Beckys Creek	1	2	0	0	0
Bluestone	33	C	2	9	27
Calvin Price State Forest	1	2	9	1	2
Castleman Run	2	0	1	1	1
Coopers Rock	4	2	0	1	C
Cornstalk, Chief	8	12	7	C	2
Cross Creek	1	4	0	0	0
Edwards Run	0	0	1	0	0
Greenbrier State Forest	5	3	5	2	3
Hillcrest	1	4	0	0	0
Hughes River	0	0	3	C	2
Kumbrabow State Forest	3	4	0	0	0
McClintic	6	4	6	C	4
Nathaniel Mountain	3	0	1	0	1

Table 5. Continued

Locality	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
State Owned or Leased					
Pleasants Creek	2	C	C	C	C
Ritchie Mines	1	C	C	C	C
Seneca State Forest	15	0	0	6	5
Short Mountain	4	3	4	3	6
Sleepy Creek	10	11	3	11	2
Snake Hill	C	1	C	C	C
Springfield	8	2	3	0	0
Stonecoal	1	4	C	C	C
Stonewall Jackson	9	13	C	C	C
Summersville	2	4	5	0	8
Underwood	0	0	1	C	C
Widmyer	0	0	1	0	1
Subtotal	124	75	53	35	73
Private Land	2,981	2,484	1,631	1,197	930
Unknown	0	1	2	0	1
State Total	3,505	2,808	1,841	1,357	1,130

Table 6. Fall wild turkey harvest by week of season, 2004-2005.

Week of Season	Harvest		Percent	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
Unknown	73	69	5	6
Week 1	521	511	38	45
Week 2	331	250	25	22
Week 3	260	180	19	16
Week 4	172	120	13	11
Total	1,357	1,130	100	100

Table 7. Total spring and fall wild turkey harvest, West Virginia, 1966-2005.

Year	Spring	Fall	Total	Rank
1966	12	1,334	1,346	39
1967	42	989	1,031	40
1968	134	1,697	1,831	38
1969	243	3,430	3,673	28
1970	370	3,020	3,390	31
1971	421	2,374	2,795	35
1972	589	2,353	2,942	34
1973	554	3,038	3,592	29
1974	596	2,158	2,754	36
1975	585	2,827	3,412	30
1976	721	1,860	2,581	37
1977	719	2,998	3,717	27
1978	566	2,803	3,369	32
1979	873	2,421	3,294	33
1980	1,459	3,696	5,155	24
1981	1,970	3,135	5,105	25
1982	2,458	5,684	8,142	20
1983	2,627	2,224	4,851	26
1984	3,387	2,414	5,801	23
1985	4,215	2,343	6,558	22
1986	4,774	3,130	7,904	21
1987	5,665	4,114	9,779	17
1988	6,526	2,939	9,465	18
1989	7,245	2,204	9,449	19
1990	9,152	3,504	12,656	14
1991	10,097	3,690	13,787	13
1992	11,299	3,518	14,817	8
1993	13,428	3,536	16,964	6
1994	15,501	3,351	18,852	4
1995	16,770	3,211	19,981	2
1996	16,618	2,870	19,488	3
1997	14,021	3,385	17,406	5
1998	12,467	1,678	14,145	11
1999	11,241	2,901	14,142	12
2000	12,794	1,541	14,335	10
2001	17,875	3,505	21,380	1
2002	13,385	2,808	16,193	7
2003	12,535	1,841	14,376	9
2004	10,573	1,357	11,930	16
2005	10,957	1,130	12,087	15
Total	255,464	109,011	364,475	

WILD BOAR

by
Thomas L. Dotson

Hunters killed 12 wild boars during the 2005 season. Archery hunters took 2 and firearms hunters killed 10. One half came from near the original wild boar release site at the head of Spruce-Laurel Creek in Boone County. The remainder came from one general location in Logan County.

The first boar season was in 1979 and the kills have ranged from 3 that year to 158 in 1995, then declined to 38 in 2002. In 2003 the December segment of the season was removed. The results are annual harvests of 5, 7 and 12, respectively (Table 1).

The main reason for the decline of wild boar in the four southern counties of Boone, Logan, Raleigh, and Wyoming is believed to be habitat degradation resulting in poor reproduction and survival. Specifically, mountain top mining and logging have eliminated much of the once mature oak forest that was favored by the boar.

Biologists do not believe that boar hunting contributed to the population decline. Past seasons have been short and hunter participation restricted by permits. However, season restrictions are the only methods available that might increase populations. A single firearms season scheduled in late October is designed to reduce the harvest and provide an increased number of boar the additional time needed to occupy more productive habitats. Traditionally hunters have been less successful during the October gun season. Weather conditions are usually warm and dry and leaf fall makes boar and boar sign more difficult to find. This new harvest strategy accomplished the objective and reduced the harvest.

Since the season changes in 2003 the harvest has shown progressive though modest increases. Hunters report more sign scattered over a larger area. This is cause for cautious optimism. However, accelerated mining activity continues to degrade habitat and limit hunter access. As a result, the future of wild boar hunting is still uncertain.

Biologists with the Division of Natural Resources continue to monitor wild boar densities. The February 2004 survey showed a severely decimated boar population. The areas surveyed will be revisited in the summer of 2006 to confirm or disprove population increases indicated by harvest and hunter reports.

Table 1. Hunting statistics for West Virginia wild boar seasons, 1979-2005.

Year	Gun Permits Available	Gun Kill			Total Kill
		Early Season*	December	Archery Kill	
1979	200	3			3
1980	600	9			9
1981	1,200	31			31
1982	1,500	69			69
1983	1,500	50			50
1984	3,000	76			76
1985	3,000	52			52
1986	4,000	29		6	35
1987	5,000	63		11	74
1988	5,000	29		5	34
1989	6,000	29	79	8	116
1990	6,000	16	62	8	86
1991	6,000	20	38	1	59
1992	6,000	39	72	19	130
1993	6,000	13	61	8	82
1994	6,000	21	53	12	86
1995	6,000	34	105	19	158
1996	6,000	51	56	32	139
1997	6,000	43	61	37	141
1998	6,000	16	30	12	58
1999	6,000	19	56	21	96
2000	6,000	7	36	3	46
2001	4,000	11	14	18	43
2002	4,000	3	26	9	38
2003	Permit Not Required	3	-	2	5
2004	Permit Not Required	3	-	4	7
2005	Permit Not Required	10	-	2	12
Total		749	749	237	1,735

*Early Season: Held in late October or early November.



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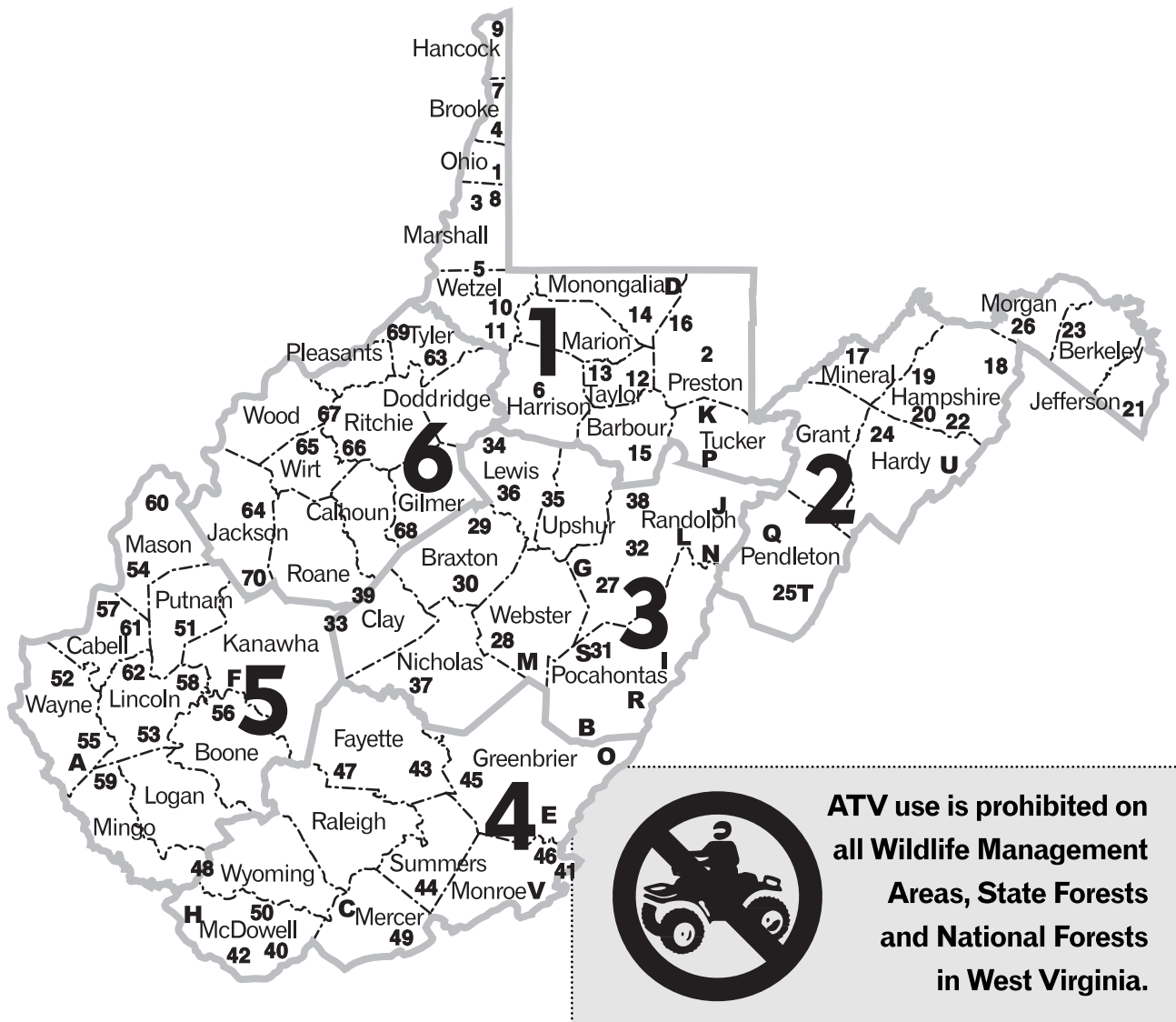


Public Lands - Wildlife Management Areas

District	WMA	Acres	Class Q Access	Big Game	Small Game	Fishing Lake	Stream	Boating	Camping Tent	Trailer	Ownership
1	WVDNR (304) 825-6787 1110 Railroad Street Farmington, WV 26571-0099	1. Bear Rocks Lake	242	•	•	•	•	•			WVDNR
		2. Briery Mountain	1,162		•	•					WV Armory
		3. Burches Run Lake	55	•	•	•		•			WVDNR
		4. Castleman's Run Lake	486		•	•		•			WVDNR
		5. Cecil H. Underwood	2,097		•	•	•				WVDNR
		6. Center Branch	974		•	•					WVDNR
		7. Cross Creek	2,080		•	•					WVDNR
		8. Dunkard Fork	470	•	•	•	•	•			WCWC
		9. Hillcrest	2,212	•	•	•					WVDNR
		10. Lantz Farm and Preserve	548		•	•	•				WJU
		11. Lewis Wetzel	13,590	•	•	•			•	•	WVDNR
		12. Pleasant Creek	2,976		•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR/COE
		13. Pruntytown State Farm	1,764		•	•					WVDOA
		14. Snake Hill	3,092		•	•					WVDNR
		15. Teter Creek Lake	137	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR
2	WVDNR (304) 822-3551 1 Depot Street Romney, WV 26757	16. Upper Deckers Creek	56		•	•					WVDNR
		17. Allegheny	5,884		•	•	•				WVDNR
		18. Edwards Run	397		•	•	•				WVDNR
		19. Fort Mill Ridge	217		•	•	•				WVDNR
		20. Nathaniel Mountain	10,675		•	•			•	•	WVDNR
		21. Shannondale Springs	1,566		•	•	•	•			WVDNR
		22. Short Mountain	8,005		•	•	•		•	•	WVDNR
		23. Sleepy Creek	22,928	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR
		24. South Branch	1,097		•	•	•	•			WVDNR
		25. Thorn Creek	528		•	•	•				WVDNR
3	WVDNR (304) 924-6211 Box 38 French Creek, WV 26218	26. Wildmeyer	422		•	•					WVDNR
		27. Becky Creek	1,930		•	•			•		WVDOA
		28. Big Ditch	388	•	•	•		•			WVDNR
		29. Burnsville Lake	12,579	•	•	•		•	•	•	COE
		30. Elk River	18,225	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR/COE
		31. Handley	784	•	•	•	•		•		WVDNR
		32. Huttonsville State Farm	2,720		•	•	•				WVDOA
		33. Morris Creek	9,874		•	•	•	•			TRUST
		34. Smoke Camp	252		•	•					WVDNR
		35. Stonecoal Lake	3,000	•	•	•	•	•			AEC
		36. Stonewall Jackson Lake	18,289	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	COE
		37. Summersville Lake	5,974	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	COE
		38. Valley Bend	31		•	•					WVDNR
4	WVDNR (304) 256-6947 2006 Robert C. Byrd Dr. Beckley, WV 25801-8320	39. Wallback	11,757	•	•	•	•				WVDNR
		40. Anawalt	2,097		•	•	•				WVDNR
		41. Andrew Rowan Farm	650		•	•					WVDOA
		42. Berwind Lake	90						•		WVDNR
		43. Beury Mountain	3,061		•	•					WVDNR
		44. Bluestone Lake	18,019	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	COE
		45. Meadow River	2,504		•	•					WVDNR/DOH
		46. Moncove Lake	898		•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR
		47. Plum Orchard Lake	3,201		•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR
		48. R.D. Bailey Lake	17,280		•	•	•	•			COE
5	WVDNR (304) 675-0871 Route 1, Box 484 Pt. Pleasant, WV 25550	49. Tate Lohr	576		•	•					WVDNR
		50. Tug Fork	2,165		•	•	•				WVDNR
		51. Amherst/Plymouth	7,061		•	•	•				Amherst Ind.
		52. Beech Fork Lake	7,531		•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR/COE
		53. Big Ugly	5,300		•	•					WVDNR
		54. Chief Cornstalk	11,772		•	•	•		•		WVDNR
		55. East Lynn Lake	22,928		•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR
		56. Fork Creek	7,000		•	•			•		CCC
		57. Green Bottom	1,096		•	•	•				WVDNR/COE
		58. Hilbert	289		•	•					WVDNR
		59. Laurel Lake	12,854		•	•	•				WVDNR/FLG
		60. McClintic	3,655	•	•	•	•		•		WVDNR
6	WVDNR (304) 420-4550 2311 Ohio Ave. Parkersburg, WV 26101	61. Mill Creek	1,470		•	•					WVDNR
		62. Upper Mud River	1,725		•	•	•	•			LCC
		63. Conway Run	630		•	•	•		•		WVDNR
		64. Frozen Camp	2,735		•	•	•	•			WVDNR
		65. Hughes River	10,000	•	•	•	•				Heartwood
		66. Ritchie Mines	2,300		•	•					WVDNR
		67. Sand Hill	967		•	•					CNGTC
		68. Stumptown	1,674		•	•	•				WVDNR
		69. The Jug	2,065		•	•	•		•		WVDNR
		70. Woodrum	1,700		•	•	•	•			WVDNR

Forest Lands - Public Lands

	Forests	Acres	Class Q Access	Big Game	Small Game	Fishing Lake	Stream	Boating	Camping Tent	Trailer	Ownership
State	A. Cabwaylingo	8,123			•		•		•	•	WVDNR
	B. Calvin Price	10,182		•	•		•		•	•	WVDNR
	C. Camp Creek	5,897		•	•		•		•	•	WVDNR
	D. Coopers Rock	12,698		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	WVDNR
	E. Greenbrier	5,130		•	•				•	•	WVDNR
	F. Kanawha	9,250		•	•				•	•	WVDNR
	G. Kumbrabow	9,165		•	•		•		•		WVDNR
	H. Panther	11,087		•			•		•	•	WVDNR
	I. Seneca	11,681		•	•	•	•	•	•		WVDNR
National	J. Beaver Dam	37,674	•	•	•		•		•		USFS
	K. Blackwater	58,978	•	•	•		•		•	•	USFS
	L. Cheat	80,771		•	•		•		•		USFS
	M. Cranberry	158,147	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	USFS
	N. Little River	124,483		•	•	•	•	•	•		USFS
	O. Neola	104,741	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	USFS
	P. Otter Creek	68,782	•	•	•		•		•	•	USFS
	Q. Potomac	139,786	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	USFS
	R. Rimel	67,613	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	USFS
	S. Tea Creek	67,919	•	•	•		•		•	•	USFS
	T. Shenandoah	49,106		•	•	•		•	•	•	USFS
	U. Wardensville	55,327		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	USFS
	V. Potts Creek	18,526		•	•		•				USFS





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